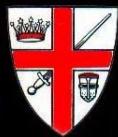


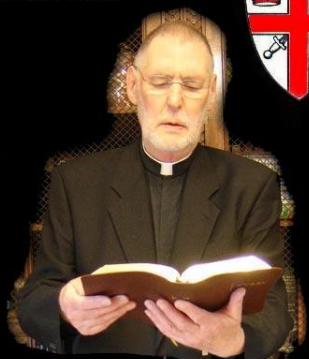


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**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119: 105**



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Evangelical House Churches

Berea Bible Handbook – Part Nineteen The Book of Revelation

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**The study is interlined with the Annotated Bible Commentary on
Revelation by Arno C. Gaebelein. (Public Domain)**



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The Importance of Studying the Book of Revelation

The Second Coming in Revelation The Thessalonian Church as Example

The church of Thessalonica was the only church in the New Testament times in which the apostle Paul acknowledged their great understanding of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The knowledge that the church of Thessalonica had cannot be compared even to the most faithful churches in our days. Looking at the background of these Thessalonians that before the coming of Paul to this city, there was none even one Christian in the city. However, Paul, having spent time to teach and preach the word of God, the church had grown rapidly in their understanding of the mystery of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. At the Missionary Journey of Paul

The beginning of the church of Thessalonica was at the second missionary journey of Paul together with Silas and Timothy. Before they entered the city of Thessalonica, Paul and his companions Timothy and Silas were badly treated at the first arrival in Europe in the city of Philippi. They were unjustly beaten, put to the prison because of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. However by the providence of God they managed to escape from this city and continued their ways westward across and reached the country of Macedonia. Act 17:1-4 recorded that their arrival was truly by the leading and direction of the Lord. It was in this time that Paul held one of the greatest Bible Conferences in all the history. “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbaths days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.”

Paul and his little band missionary arrived in the new mission field where apparently there was not even Christian there before they came. There was no any means to tell others about the gospel such TV, Radio, etc. There was not financial guarantee at all, in fact only three to four weeks available to do the necessary things and preach the gospel but it brought the greatest impact to the people. The powerful testimony for Christ was established in that city. Not only the church was established but also their understanding of the Word of God and

faith had grown in their hearts of the program of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Sending of the Letter to the Church of Thessalonica

The main key Luke has recorded in Acts is the teaching concerning the dead and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as predicted in the Old Testament. After the departure of Paul and the group from the city of Thessalonica, then Paul soon wrote a little letter to them concerning the teaching of the word of God, concerning the meaning of the dead and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote to them about the heart of the gospel, he was able to tell them about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that amazed us that how much they knew about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First Thessalonians is the first letter Paul wrote to the brand new church of Thessalonica. This was written for even after Paul pleaded from that city, he still did not know what had happened to those new Christians, whether they were so discouraged and scattered, or whether the church was broken up and destroyed. The heart of Paul was deeply burnt, and then he wrote a letter to them as he said in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (Why) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.”

When we read that verse, we, Christians who live in this generation are amazed about the knowledge that the Thessalonians have. Their knowledge of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was so perfect, mature, complete and even the great apostle said that he did not need to tell them about all these. The times and the seasons are prophetic time and season just like Jesus told to his disciples in Acts 1:7 that the time and the season are in the father’s hand and you do not have to know when will be the time. This is to say that the new Christians in the church of Thessalonica knew perfectly what will happen and what the order of the events when Christ returns. The church of Thessalonica was just a new-born church in which Paul served for few weeks but their understanding of the Word of God was really great. This is the question to all believers in this generation, how long have we known the Lord Jesus Christ and how long have we had the Bible in our own language to read, study and understand? We are ashamed to ourselves because of the knowledge that we have so little though we have the Bible in our own hand.

3. The Maturity of the Christians in the church of Thessalonica

The church in Thessalonica perhaps was just two months old and yet they have known so much about the significant of the dead and resurrection the Messiah

predicted in the Old Testament. They also knew about the things that will happen at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact in 1 and 2 Thessalonians Paul wrote to this little church that every single chapter of this book is referring to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For example, let us see some of the passages in first Thessalonians concerning the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the end of 1 Thessalonians 1 in verse 10 “To wait for his Son from heaven....even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.” In 1 Thessalonians 2:19 says “For what is our hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? In 1 Thessalonians 3:13 “To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” The Lord Jesus Christ will be coming therefore we must be prepared in our heart for that great event. This was further described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of th archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” This is the great promises of the rapture of the church that will take place. In 1 Thessalonians 5 is full of prophecy of the events of the coming of the Lord and the climax is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That every part and every aspect of our being might be so sanctified and cleansed from the habits of sins for the joyful union with the Lord in that day.

In 2 Thessalonians 1 we can see also some of the things and promises that will happen at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His angels. Everything has been described in the book including the coming of the Antichrist as mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the Antichrist will claim that he is God. Thus Paul told them in 2 Thessalonians 2:5 “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” Paul has told them about the great apostasy and what the Antichrist will do in the temple because all these are the prophetic programs of God. Having seen all this truth mastered by the church of Thessalonians, we marvel for the zeal of learning that these believers have concerning the Word of God. It is absolutely that there is no even one church in our days that have such zeal in the Word of God. In fact we wonder when are the church and Bible classes started, how much the Bible prophetic of the word of God is given? Some may say that the study of the prophetic books is difficult to understand and complicated. But one thing that we need to know is that all the prophetic truth in the Bible is intended by God for us to know and learn.

From the Author and Publisher on Revelation

There should be no intolerance to the credit and authority of the Book of Revelation, just because it has been rejected by corrupt minds as Cerdon and Marcion, as well as others even up to today. Knowing the Holy Scriptures, our ‘Bible’ as a unit and each individual book correlated with each other, great light shines on the last book of the Bible. The images and superscriptions of this book, also variously called the ‘Apocalypse’ as from Greek, meaning ‘unveiling or uncovering’, are truly sacred and divine, and its contains agreeable with the other books, especially with the prophetic books as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and more. The People of God, the community of believers have always been blessed with prophecy. The glorious prediction of breaking the serpent’s head was the stay and support of the patriarchal age, while the many prophecies concerned mainly the Messiah to come, the Gospel Message of the Old Testament as found for a great deal in Isaiah. Christ Himself prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, and about the time in which that was accomplished. With His Spirit he entrusted the Apostle John with the Book of Revelation, as he did with the fourth Gospel underlying all along the way, Salvation through yielding faith in Jesus Christ, entering as such the “Spiritual Church” of the Master and in His stream of love through His believers the world over. The Book of Revelation is delivered to all believers as a prediction of the most important events that will happen at the end of time, for the support of the faith of his people and the direction of their hope. The last book of the Bible is revealing because God therein makes to discover those things which could never have been sifted out by the reasoning of human understanding, those deep things of God which no man knows, but only the Spirit of God, and those to whom He revealed them.

Many people think that the Book of Revelation is all bad news. However, though it reveals where actions and decisions will take us, it also brings forward how mankind will finally experience world peace. Its message is in reality very simple. It promises that God will institute universal peace, prosperity and support the world over, immediately after the return of Jesus Christ. It reveals as well how this wonderful new world and order will be established and why it will never be destroyed or outdated by any other way of life or even social order.

The book of Revelation was written by a Hebrew Christian of Palestine who, after a period of exile in the Isle of Patmos, settled in Asia Minor, His name was John:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the

word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (Revelation 1: 1-2)" (KJV)

The Revelation was given to Jesus Christ by God as sovereign ruler. It was signified to John, and he wrote what he saw and heard. It is not known when the book was written, not by what emperor John was banished to the Isles of Patmos. Some think it was Claudius (A.D. 41-54), others Nero (A.D. 54-68), and still others Domitian (A.D. 81-96). It is generally attributed to the last named, and if so, the date of the book would be rather after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The author announces himself in the opening verse of the writing as 'his' (God's) servant 'John'. He frequently refers to himself in 'Revelation', most commonly as a prophet.

"Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1: 2-3) (KJV)

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. Revelation 1: 9 – 11)" (KJV)

"And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (Revelation 10: 11)" (KJV)

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19: 10)" (KJV)

"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy

fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. (Revelation 22: 8-9)" (KJV)

Never in Revelation, had he called himself an ‘apostle’. In this respect he differs markedly from the apostle Paul.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. (Romans 1: 1)” (KJV)

“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office. Romans 11: 13)” (KJV)

“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother. (1 Corinthians 1: 1)” (KJV)

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia. (2 Corinthians 1: 1)” (KJV)

“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1: 1 – 3)” (KJV)

From the latter part of the second century it was assumed that the fourth gospel, the epistles of John and Revelation were written by one man, John the son of Zebedee. There were, however, controversies in the assumption, which were recognised from early times, Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria in the third century, who was especially impressed by the differences in style and language between Revelation and the other works attributed to John. However, it has been suggested that these differences may be accounted for by the differences in subject matter and nature of the Book of Revelation and the fourth Gospel; or, by the possibility that the last book of the Bible was written a generation before the gospel (at the end of Nero’s reign), so giving time to the writer to have changed his style of writing. More plausibly, John may have written the book in his own language which is the Aramaic, and some else translated it into literal Greek out of reverence of its content. If that would be the case, the linguistic differences would disappear. Some others think, that John thought in Aramaic and wrote in Greek, the differences would be insurmountable, for that was not so with the author of the gospel and the epistles

There are fewer ancient manuscripts of the Book of Revelation than of any other part of the New Testament, and some of those now known were not discovered till after the date of the A.V. This makes the ‘various readings’ now introduced very numerous, some of them being of great importance. Anyway, the book is not ‘the revelation of John’, but rather ‘the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to John.’

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (Revelation 1: 1-2)” (KJV)

The authenticity of that claim is settled not by the name of the person who wrote it, but by the nature of his work, which in the providence of God, the Book of Revelation completes the Holy Scriptures as its crown. Other evidence for John’s authorship from early writers as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.

The Book of Revelation puts many of the earlier prophecies of the Old Testament part of the Bible into an comprehensible context and reveals a much-needed structure for prophecies concerning the end of age. It brings about this partly through the use of symbols and symbolic language that relate directly to some of the Bible’s other prophetic writings in the Old Testament.

Example: the prophetic book of Daniel uses similar language and symbols, and also clearly explained. However, God revealed to Daniel that the meaning of others is to remain secretly obscured until the end of days. And, will be understood at that time. Revelation contains a lot of fundamental keys to that understanding, and reversely the book of Daniel contains keys that help the believer to understand the book of Revelation.

Let us, as example, explain one of his important visions:

“And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. (Daniel 12: 8-9)” (KJV)

Contrast the above with God’s intention for the Book of Revelation. God the Father gave the prophecies contained in Revelation to His Son, Jesus Christ. He passed it to Christ in the form of a scroll sealed with seven seals as John saw in his vision:

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. (Revelation 5: 1)” (KJV)

However, John who wrote the last book of the Bible under God’s inspiration, tells us in his last chapter, that an angel specially commanded him:

“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (Revelation 22: 10-12)” (KJV)

John explains that in the vision God the Father gave most of the Book of Revelation to Christ in the form of a scroll sealed with seven seals. Our Saviour, then, broke those seals and opened the scroll. Just read:

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. (Revelation 5: 1-5)” (KJV)

These verses are the key to understand the twenty chapters of the Book of Revelation. Simply this, Jesus alone can unlock the mystery of its symbols, visions and descriptions. The very first verse of the book announces that it is:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. (Revelation 1: 1)” (KJV)

Jesus Christ reveals its meaning, unlocks its seals, but how does he do this?

There are two main factors. First, the keys to unlock the content of the seven seals must be explained by the Lord Jesus Himself. Secondly, the Word of God tells us that “all Scripture is given by God through inspiration”:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3: 16)” (KJV)

In this way, we can expect explanation of some of the symbols in Revelation in other parts of the inspired ‘Word of God’. We can fully rely on the whole Holy Scriptures, as it is God’s inspired Word, rather than our own opinions based on liberal and modern biblical theologians in their lack of faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1: 20-21)” (KJV)

The Book of Revelation is purely revealed knowledge. It is very profitable to remember that some of the things revealed to Daniel in visions were sealed and hidden until the time of the end, but adding:

“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. (Daniel 12: 10)” (KJV)

At the end of days, God intends that those He calls “the wise” will understand these prophecies.

Interesting to note that the Book of Revelation indicates a similarity with the Gospel of John, utilising words that are common to both: Logos, Lamb, Jesus, witness, true, overcome, dwell, fountain of living waters, and others.

However...

The Book of Revelation has been the subject of different systems of interpretation. During the first three centuries, the early return of Christ as expected, to be followed by a millennial reign of Christ for the literal thousand years. The persecuting power portrayed in Revelation chapters 13 to 17 was assumed to be pagan Rome, and the symbols were given a spiritual interpretation; Hippolytus saw the Christian Church in the woman of chapter 12, and in the ten horns of chapter 17, ten kingdoms which should arise to replace the Roman Empire.

The Reformation saw the development of three systems known as the ‘Præterist, Historical, and Futurist’, all of which find advocates today. The first of these

regards the prophecy as finally fulfilled in the circumstances of the time when it appeared. It is adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and at the other extreme by the rationalistic critics. The ‘Historical’ system was adopted by the Reformers generally, and later by Sir Isaac Newton and Bengel; it identifies papal Rome, the Vatican, as the persecuting power, and sees the various judgments progressively fulfilled in the course of history. The ‘Futurist’ school sees in chapters two and three, an outline picture of the church’s history, and awaits the fulfilment of the remainder, of a more or less literal character, in connection with the second advent of Christ. There also a fourth system, known as ‘the eclectic’ or idealist, stressing the spiritual principles of the book, not attempting to dogmatise on details of the more mysterious visions. This school believes that there are three types of passages in the Apocalypse: those that are very clear in their spiritual teaching; those that are mysterious, and yet contain an element of truth that is instructive; and those that are so veiled that it is futile from our present knowledge to give positive interpretations.

Let us always bear in mind that the Book of Revelation was truly written for the needs of its original readers as any other book or letter of the New Testament. Its historical situation must never be forgotten. Inasmuch as God does not act on caprice, there are to be discerned in the prophecies expressions of those principles which ever obtain, both in the lives of individuals and nations. There are occasions in history when we can identify such secondary fulfilments of John’s words, and here the historical method of interpretation finds some justification.

The Purpose of the Book

Revelation was written to provide comfort and assurance to Christians who were being persecuted and murdered by the Romans. To properly understand this book we must study it from a first century perspective.

The Time Frame of the Book: The book describes events that were to come to pass shortly. The time for its fulfilment was said to be near when it was written. The judgments in the book were to take place without delay. John was told not to seal the book because the time for its fulfilment was near. One should view with suspicion any interpretation of this book that ignores these clear statements.

Old Testament Parallels: Revelation describes a judgment by God against a great oppressor of his people. We see a prelude to the judgment, we see the judgment itself, and we see the aftermath of the judgment from the perspective of the victors and from the perspective of the vanquished. The language used to describe these events is taken from Old Testament descriptions of past judgment against Babylon, Edom, Judah, and Nineveh. The language used to describe the blessings of the victorious Constitutional Church of Christ (*See ‘appendix’, page*

200) in the later chapters of Revelation is used in the Old Testament to describe the blessings that Christians are presently enjoying under the reign of Christ. To understand Revelation we must study the Old Testament.

Preconceptions: We must study this book without preconceptions. In Matthew 24:30, 34 we see a coming of Christ that is not his final coming.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24: 30)” (KJV)

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Matthew 24: 34)” (KJV)

In Daniel 7:9-10 we see a great judgment scene that is not the final judgment of the world.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7: 9 – 10)” (KJV)

In Daniel 12:2 we see a resurrection that does not refer to the final resurrection of the saints.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12: 2)” (KJV)

In studying the Book of Revelation we should not jump to conclusions that violate the time frame and historical context of the book.

Introduction to the Book of Revelation

by
Arno C. Gaebelein

This great final Book of the Word of God may well be called the capstone of the entire Bible. A pyramid becomes a pyramid by the great capstone, and the Bible becomes the full and complete revelation of God through this document “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” If this book were not in the Bible, the Bible would be an unfinished book; the issues raised in the preceding documents would be forever unsolved.

This disposes at once of the miserable attempts which have been made by critics and others to eliminate the book of Revelation from the canon of the New Testament. Revelation is a necessity. “A book which offers in some way or other to open up those secrets of God which yet lie hidden in the future, seems wholly in place in our sacred Scriptures. It is towards some such book that our thoughts have been moving as we travelled through the Gospels, the Acts and Epistles; for all alike point forward to a consummation of all things, to a time when the kingdom of God shall be finally and completely established, when all creation shall cease to groan and travail, when the inheritance of which we have received the first fruits shall be wholly ours. It is, moreover, towards some such book that our hearts seem to yearn as we travel through the earlier volumes of experience, discovering the contradictions between what should be and what is, accumulating impressions of the Protean forms and tremendous power of wickedness, and craving for the manifestation of triumphant righteousness. Thus both the Christian Bible and the Christian consciousness seem to demand a book of revelation for their completion or satisfaction” (C. Anderson Scott).

The Authorship

The title of the book as we find it in the King James Version is “The Revelation of St. John the Divine”; the better title would be to take the opening words of the book and call it “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” But the above title tells us that John is the author. This is confirmed by the book itself, for we read twice in the first chapter that the writer says “John to the seven churches,” and again, “I, John, who also am your brother” (Revelation 1:4; Revelation 1:9). Furthermore, at the close of the book he names himself again: “And I, John, saw these things” (Revelation 22:8). The Church down to the middle of the third century has but one testimony as to the authorship of this book, and that is, the Johannine, that John, the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedee, wrote this book in the isle of Patmos when banished there. The only exceptions were the Alogians, a heretical sect which also rejected the Gospel of John, and a controversialist by name of Caius.

As it is of much interest to be acquainted with the testimony of the many early witnesses in refutation of the destructive critics, who attack this great book, we give a brief summary of these historical evidences.

The first witness is Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 140 in the Dialogue, "that a certain man, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in an apocalypse (revelation) which came to him that believers should reign a thousand years in Jerusalem. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, according to the historian Eusebius, wrote treatises on "the devil and on the Apocalypse of John." This was about the year 170. Then follow the testimonies of Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (180); and Apollonius.

A greater witness still is Irenaeus. We remind the reader of our introduction to the Gospel of John, and call to mind the fact that Irenaeus was in his youth acquainted with Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. A number of times Irenaeus speaks of "Ioannes Domini discipulus"--John the disciple of the Lord--and that he had written the Apocalypse. Tertullian (about 200 A.D.) refers in his writings four times to the Revelation as being the work of the Apostle John. The so-called Muratorian fragments quote from the Revelation, and it can be shown by the context of the passage that the Apostle John was believed to be author.

Clement of Alexandria (about 200 A.D.) mentions also John, the beloved disciple as the writer of the book. A scholar of Clement was Origen (233 A.D.). He made careful research about the canonicity and genuineness of the books of the New Testament. While he reported carefully any doubts or disputes about different books, he has nothing to say about the Revelation and its author. He quotes from the book frequently, and it proves that in his time no question was raised about John being the author. Hippolytus, Bishop of Ostia (240 A.D.) quotes John's words many times and does not leave us in doubt that he means the son of Zebedee.

Then follow a host of witnesses. The first commentator, as far as we know, of the Revelation was Bishop Victorinus. He states positively that the Apostle John wrote the Revelation (about 303 A.D.). Ephrem Syrus (about 378), the greatest scholar in the Syrian church, repeatedly in his numerous writings, cites the Revelation as canonical and ascribes it to the Apostle John. The Syrian translation of the Bible, the Peshito, probably made in the second century, does not contain the book of Revelation, yet Ephrem Syrus possessed the Syrian translation. Scholars who have examined this question say that the Peshito in its original version had the book of Revelation, and that it was later detached, while others advanced the theory that the Peshito translation may have been made in the first century when the Apocalypse was not yet generally known.

After citing many more witnesses, including Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine--and others, Dean Alford says: "The apostolic authorship rests on the firmest ground. We have it assured to us by one who had companied men who had known St. John himself; we have it held in continuous succession by Fathers in all parts of the Church. Nowhere, in primitive times, does there appear any counter-tradition on the subject."

The First Critic

This unquestionable historical evidence of the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse was first attacked by Dionysius, the disciple of Origen and Bishop of Alexandria. In the second half of the third century this scholar raised his voice against the solid traditional view, declaring that not the same man could have written the fourth Gospel, the Epistles of John and Revelation. He also pointed out the contrast between the language, the grammar, and the diction of the Apocalypse and the other writings of the Apostle John. He suggested another man by name of John, a presbyter of Ephesus, as the author of the Revelation. He spoke of two tombs in Ephesus, one in which the body of the apostle was buried and in the other John the presbyter. But Dionysius spoke of this John the presbyter, yet he was entirely unknown to him. It was a new idea he invented to back up his contention, for such a person was wholly unknown to the ecclesiastical tradition in the church of Alexandria in the middle of the third century. Nor does it appear that his opinion on the authorship of the Revelation made any permanent impression on the Alexandrian church. That this "John the presbyter" is a fictitious person, who never existed, is fully demonstrated by the entire, the complete disappearance of John the presbyter from the memory of the Church of the second century.

But modern critics like Bleek, Duesterdieck, Ewald, and others have seized upon this man of straw and followed the invention of Dionysius about the two Johns. Other critics have gone a step further and reject wholly the tradition that the Apostle John lived and died in Ephesus, thus making the other John the sole outstanding bearer of the name in that community, ascribing to him not only the book of Revelation but also the fourth Gospel. Modern critics reject the Johannine authorship of the Revelation. They hold that a work of small compass, by somebody, nobody knows who wrote it, was worked over by somebody else, then expanded by somebody else, passing through three or four redactions till it took on the form of the book we call "The Revelation." They also claim that at best the Revelation is "a Christian redaction of a Jewish apocalypse."

The book also received a strange treatment from the different reformers. Luther for a time treated the Revelation with suspicion and questioned its inspiration; later he greatly modified this opinion. Zwingli followed the theory of Dionysius

and attributed it to another John; he excluded it from the Bible. Calvin, however, believed in its canonicity and upheld the apostolic authorship. Melanchthon did the same.

All the criticism has not affected in the least the truth that John, the Apostle, the author of the Gospel of John and The Epistles, is the author also of the book of Revelation. The fact is, the Holy Spirit seems to have taken special care to preserve such historical evidences for the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which makes the true authorship and date unimpeachable.

“The apostolic authorship and canonicity of the Apocalypse were generally accepted, and went unchallenged, until toward the third century. Then contrary views began to make their appearance. But when the evidence, direct and indirect, on either side is weighed in respect of its date, its quantity, its quality, its freedom from bias, the external evidence in favor of the Johannine authorship, outweighs the other at every point.”

The Date of the Book

It is interesting to find that the modern critics have done the opposite with the date of the book of Revelation from what they have done with the other Bible books. They generally fix the date of a book later than the traditional view holds; but they assign to the Apocalypse an earlier date than that which the Church has held in the past. Some have dated it during the reign of Nero. They do so on account of some particular interpretation of certain historical allusions. Of late some of the critics have adopted the later date, the year 96 A.D., that is the traditional view held from the beginning. Irenaeus, the friend of Polycarp, who knew John, stated about the year 180 that “the Revelation was seen at Patmos at the end of Domitian’s reign.” Domitian reigned from 81 to 96 A.D. Then Clement of Alexandria left the testimony behind that John returned from his exile to the island of Patmos on the death of the emperor, which was Emperor Domitian, in the year 96. This is the correct date.

The Message and Interpretation

Revelation is marked out in the beginning as a book of prophecy ([Revelation 1:3](#)). Of this we have more to say in the Preface and Key to Revelation, which follows this introduction. Furthermore, the book is in greater part written in symbolical language, which is a very important fact to be remembered in the interpretation. The message is prophetic, and this message is clothed in symbols, which are not difficult to interpret. Our analysis will show that the accusation brought against this book, as being disjointed a veritable chaos, is wholly unfounded. Like all the other books of the Word of God it has a perfect arrangement.

There are three modes of interpreting this book, with its prophecies and symbols. The historical interpretation claims that the book covers the entire history of the Church and pictures the antagonism of the forces of evil in the world against the church. This method was in vogue during the Reformation period and for several centuries down to the nineteenth, especially during the Napoleonic upheavals, it was the acknowledged method of interpretation. It still has supporters. The Reformers saw in the Antichrist, the beast, the pope and the Romish church. Luther was very strong on that. On the other side, the Catholic exegetes, who also employed the same method, branded Protestantism as the Antichrist, and discovered that the mysterious 666 was contained in the name of Dr. Martin Luther. Then Napoleon was seen by believers living toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries as fulfilling the thirteenth chapter in Revelation. Many predictions were made and the different numbers, the three years and a half, etc., applied to the stirring history of that time, just the same as men today are trying to figure out the duration of the “times of the Gentiles,” and when certain events must occur.

The Preterist School of interpretation teaches that the greater part of the prophecies of this book have been fulfilled in the past in the struggles of the past, especially with the struggle of the Church with the Roman Empire, and that the victory of the Church as foretold in the book is accomplished. The third school is the so-called Futurist. This method of interpretation is the only satisfying one and in full harmony with the entire Prophetic Word. We follow this method in our annotations. Nothing beyond the third chapter of this book is fulfilled; all is still future, this is the claim of the Futurist school. The two chapters in which the word “Church” is exclusively found in Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) contain the prophecy concerning the Church on earth. This divinely given history of the Church is about finished and the predicted events from chapter 4 to the end of Revelation are yet to be accomplished. Chapters 5-19 contain the specific prophecy of the end of the age, the last seven years, the unfulfilled 70th week of Daniel’s great prophecy. The scripturalness of this interpretation will be readily discovered by reading the “Preface and Key to Revelation.”

There are other theories of interpretation. One of them is the Judaizing interpretation of the late Dr. Bullinger, who taught that nothing is fulfilled in the Apocalypse, that the seven churches in Asia are yet to come into existence. We request our readers and students of the Word to study carefully the article which follows this introduction and the analysis of the book.

PREFACE AND KEY TO THE REVELATION

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him.” This is the first sentence with which this last book in God’s Word begins. The best title

therefore is, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Our Lord received, according to this opening statement, a revelation from God. This must be understood in connection with Himself as the Son of Man. As the Only-Begotten He had no need of a revelation; in His deity He is acquainted with all the eternal purposes. One with God He knows the end from the beginning. But He, who is very God, took on in incarnation the form of a servant, and thus being in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself (Philippians 2:7-8). And as the Man who had passed through death, whom God raised from the dead, and exalted at His own right hand, God gave Him this revelation concerning the judgment Of the earth and the glory of Himself. “God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory” (1 Peter 1:21). What this glory is which He received from God is fully and blessedly revealed in this book. It is the revelation of His acquired glory and how this glory is to be manifested in connection with the earth. And this revelation He makes known to His servants, because His own are sharers with Him in all He received from God.

Pre-eminently His Revelation

The Revelation is pre-eminently His revelation; the revelation of His person and His glory. “In the volume of the book it is written of Me ...” (Hebrews 10:7) Martin Luther asked, “What Book and what person?” and answered, “There is only one Book--the Bible; and only one Person--Jesus Christ.” The whole Book, the Word of God, bears witness of Him, Who is the living Word. He is the centre, the sum total and the substance of the Holy Scriptures. The prayerful reader of the Bible will never read in vain if he approaches the blessed Book with the one desire to know Christ and His glory. His blessed face is seen on every page and the infallible Guide, the Holy Spirit, never fails to satisfy the longing of the believer’s heart to know more of Christ. Inasmuch as this last Bible book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, an “unveiling” of Himself, we find in it the completest revelation of His person and His glory.

It is here where many expositions of Revelation have missed the mark. Occupied chiefly with the symbols of the book, the mysteries, the judgments and the promised consummation, they have neglected to emphasize sufficiently Him, who throughout this book is pre-eminently the centre of everything. The reader of Revelation does well to read first of all through the entire book with this object in mind, to see what is said of our Lord, of His person, His present and His future glory.

We shall find all the features of His person and His work mentioned. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (Revelation 1:11); the Ancient of Days (Revelation 1:14 compare with Daniel 7:9); the “I Am,” that is, Jehovah, “I am He that liveth” (Revelation 1:18); the Son of God (Revelation 2:18). These terms speak of His deity. His earthly life in humiliation is touched upon in the

statement, “the Faithful Witness” (Revelation 1:5). His death on the cross is likewise mentioned--”He hath washed us from our sins in His blood” (Revelation 1:5); “He was dead” (Revelation 1:18); “the Lamb as it had been slain” (Revelation 5:6); “worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Revelation 5:12). He is mentioned twenty-eight times as the Lamb in Revelation and each time it reminds us of the cross and the great work accomplished there. His resurrection is seen for He is called, “the First-begotten from the dead” (Revelation 1:5), and He speaks of Himself as, “He that was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore” (Revelation 1:18); and again, “these things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive” (Revelation 2:8).

Then we behold Him “in the midst” in glory, seen face to face by all the redeemed and worshipped by them, as well as by the heavenly hosts and ultimately by every creature, the fulfilment of Philippians 2:10-11, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Revelation 5:13-14). After the fifth chapter we have His revelation as the executor of the decreed judgments. He opens the seals; He sends forth the seven angels with the judgment trumpets and the seven angels with the judgment vials, in which the wrath of God is completed. “The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). Then He is seen in the glorious union with the bride (Revelation 19:7-10) and as the victorious Christ who passeth out of heaven followed by the armies of heaven (Revelation 19:11-21), conquering the opposing forces of evil, executing the wrath of Almighty God, appearing as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The twentieth chapter reveals Him as the reigning Christ. He and His saints with Him will reign over the earth for a thousand years. And all which follows reveals Him and His glory as well as the blessed and eternal results of His work.

A Book of Prophecy

Aside from the title of the book, which indicates that it deals with things future, there is a direct statement which determines its prophetic character. In the first beatitude of the seven which are found in the book, we read that it is a book of prophecy--”Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy” (Revelation 1:3). It is known to every intelligent student of the Bible that a good part of it is prophecy. The great prophecies concerning the people Israel and the nations of the world are found in the Old Testament Scriptures. In the New Testament there is but one book of Prophecy, the Revelation. As it is the capstone of the entire revelation of God, without which the Bible would be an unfinished book, we find in its pages the consummation of the great prophecies which were given by the prophets of God in Old Testament times.

For the study of this New Testament prophetic book, the knowledge of the chief content of the Old Testament Prophetic Word is therefore an absolute necessity. For instance, to a Christian who does not have a fair grasp of Daniel's great prophecies, or is ignorant of the place which the people Israel hold in the purposes of God, the book of Revelation is a sealed book, without any possible meaning. This is one of the chief reasons why this book has suffered so much both from the critics and from the hands of commentators. The Apostle Peter saith, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" ([2 Peter 1:20-21](#)). The better translation for "private interpretation" is, "its own interpretation." It means that the interpretation of prophecy must be done by comparing Scripture with Scripture. The holy men of God, the prophets, were the instruments of the Holy Spirit and made known God's purposes in a progressive way. To understand any prophecy is only possible by taking the entire Prophetic Word into consideration. That there is a wonderful harmony in the great body of prophetic dispensational truths as found in the Bible we have demonstrated in another volume. (Harmony of the Prophetic Word has been used under God's blessing to open the minds of many to the meaning of prophecy.) This principle finds its strongest application in the interpretation of the Revelation.

The Three Classes

In 1 Corinthians 10:32 the Apostle Paul speaks of three classes into which the human race is divided: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. In the Old Testament there was no Church of God, for the Church is a New Testament institution. As the Revelation is the book of consummation these three classes must be seen in the contents of this book. Many expositors have seen nothing but the struggles of the Church in her history in this book. This is true of the so-called Preterist school and also of the Historical school of interpretation. The Preterist school teaches a fulfilment of all the apocalyptic visions in the struggles of the Church in the past. The Historical school also teaches that the visions concern mostly the Church. These schools of interpretation leave out the Jews and what is written concerning them and their final history during the end of the age, preceding the glorious appearing of our Lord. Of late another school of interpreters has come into existence. They teach that the entire book of Revelation concerns the Jewish people and that there is nothing about the Church in this last book of the Bible. Any interpretation of Revelation which ignores the Jews, the people Israel and fulfilment of Old Testament predictions concerning them is wrong. And any interpretation which teaches that there is nothing about the Church in Revelation is equally wrong. The Church and her destiny on earth, the destiny of the true Church and the destiny of the apostate

Church, or Christendom, is found in the book. The Jews and what concerns them in the end of the age, the Gentiles, the nations of the earth, and the judgments in store for them, as well as the future of the earth, a future of glory and blessing: all this is recorded in our New Testament book of prophecy.

The True Interpretation

There is a true interpretation of Revelation which is in harmony with all previous prophecies and which opens the book to our understanding. But how are we to find this true interpretation? We answer, the book itself furnishes it. This is an important fact, both convincing and conclusive. It is therefore of no profit to examine the different theories and schools of interpretation. We shall avoid the terms Preterist, Historical and Futurist, and not try, as it has been attempted, to reconcile these different modes of interpretation. There must be one true interpretation, and we claim that this is given to us by the Lord Himself in this book.

The Key Which Fits

It has often been truthfully said, every book in the Bible contains a key which unlocks the book. The Revelation is no exception. John the beloved disciple was in banishment in the isle of Patmos, as Daniel the man greatly beloved, was a captive in Babylon. The Lord called these two great servants to behold the panorama of the future. Both wrote down their visions. While in the book of Daniel we find no direct command to write, we find such a command in the first chapter of Revelation. John received divine instruction how to write the Revelation. We find this in the nineteenth verse, "Write therefore what thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to be after these." (This is the correct translation of this important verse.) John, guided by the Holy Spirit then wrote the Revelation according to the divine direction. In examining this command to write we find that three things are mentioned. He is to write first the things he had seen, then the things which are, and finally the things that are about to be after these. When John received these instructions he had already seen something and the vision he had he was instructed to write down. Then present things, the things which are, and future things, to be after present things have passed away, must be located in this book. So we have the past, the present and the future in this key verse.

Three Divisions--Where are They

It is then clear that the book of Revelation must be divided into three main divisions. How are we to locate these divisions? They are marked, so that we are not left in doubt about it. In the beginning of the fourth chapter we find a significant statement which shows where the third division begins. After these

things, that is after the contents of the opening three chapters were past, John heard the same voice speaking to him once more. He sees a door opened in heaven and is told, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must take place after these things" (Revelation 4:1). There can be no doubt at all that with the fourth chapter the seer beheld the things which take place after the preceding things which are have passed away. The third division of Revelation begins with the fourth chapter. John beholds future things from heaven into which he had been taken "in the Spirit." The things he had seen and the things which are, are therefore contained in the first three chapters of the book.

The first chapter contains the things he had seen. "What thou seest write in a book" was the first instruction John received (Revelation 1:11). In the nineteenth verse he is told, "Write therefore what thou has seen." Between Revelation 1:11 and Revelation 1:19 he saw a vision, which he was to write, and this vision constitutes the first section or division of the book. The second and third chapters form the second division, the things which are. The beginning of the fourth chapter to the end of the book is the final, the third division. There is no better and more logical key. And this key given in the book determines the true interpretation.

The Patmos Vision

"The thing thou has seen"--the first section of Revelation is the great Patmos vision, Revelation 1:12-18. It is the vision of the glorified Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands).

The Things Which Are

The things which are, the present things, begin the prophetic section of the Revelation. The second and third chapters of Revelation, the things which are, contain the messages of our Lord addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor. These messages contain the first great prophecy of Revelation. The prophecy concerns the Church on earth. We shall show in our comment on these two chapters that we have in them a divine history of the Church on earth. It is one of the most remarkable sections of the Prophetic Word. What this present age is to be religiously and how it will end is made known in other parts of the New Testament. Our Lord in some of His kingdom parables ([Matthew 13:1-58](#)) reveals the characteristics of this age. The parables of the sower, the evil seed sown into the field, the mustard seed parable and the parable of the leaven are prophetic and teach, in part at least, what the Church messages reveal. The Holy Spirit in the Epistolary testimony also reveals the religious and moral characteristics of the age, and depicts its departure from the truth, and its end. The destiny of the true Church is heavenly. She has a "blessed hope," which is to be with the Lord in glory. She is the body of Christ, and He is the "Head of

the body.” The Church is also the bride of Christ and He is the Bridegroom. The body is united to the Head in Glory; the bride will be joined to the Bridegroom. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is the Scripture which reveals this end for the true Church on earth.

The professing Church, Christendom, which rejects the doctrine of Christ and goes into apostasy has a far different destiny. The Lord will disown that which has denied His Name, and judgment and wrath is to be poured out upon apostate Christendom (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). These predictions concerning the Church on earth are contained in the seven Church messages. When we come to the close of the third chapter we find a significant promise, and equally significant threat. “I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth” (Revelation 3:10). This is the promise. It tells of the removal of the true Church, composed of all true believers, from this earthly scene. “I will spew thee out of My mouth” (Revelation 3:16). This is the threat to the apostate Church. Both the promise and the threat will be fulfilled. After the third chapter the word “church” does not occur again in Revelation. The reason for this is obvious. The history of the Church on earth terminates with the close of the third chapter. Because the true Church is no longer here but has been taken up into glory, and that which professes to be the Church is disowned by the Lord, therefore no more mention of the Church is made in Revelation.

The Things Which Are After These

The future things, things after the removal of the true Church from the earth, occupy the greater part of this book. It is of the greatest importance to see that nothing whatever after the third chapter of Revelation has yet taken place. Some speak of a past and partial fulfilment of some of the visions found in this section. In view of the scope of the book that is impossible. The open door in heaven, the voice which calls the seer to pass through that open door into heaven, is symbolical of the great coming event, the realization of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord for His saints. That this open door is mentioned immediately after the third chapter and John is suddenly in the spirit in the presence of the throne in heaven is very significant. It proves that the entire situation is now changed. And the first great vision is a vision of the saints in glory occupying thrones and worshipping God and the Lamb. With the sixth chapter the great judgment visions of this book begin. These great punitive dealings with the earth are executed from above. All transpires after the Lord has taken His saints into glory. No seal can be broken as long as this event has not been. But after the rapture, the seals of the book, which the Lamb received, are broken by Him, the trumpet and the vial judgments fall upon the earth. All this takes place after the

home-going of the true Church and before the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 19:11, etc.).

Now this portion of Revelation from chapter 6 to 19 contains the events which transpire during the end of the age. It is the unfulfilled seventieth week of the great prophecy in the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). This “end of the age” will last twice 1260 days, that is seven years. It is absolutely necessary to understand the scope of the seventy-week prophecy in Daniel in order to understand the greater part of these chapters in the Revelation. (The Prophetic Daniel by A.C.G. contains a very simple exegesis of Daniel’s prophecies.) We are led back upon Jewish ground. Events in connection with the Jewish people and Jerusalem are before us. The times of the Gentiles have taken on their final form of ten kingdoms which Daniel saw on the fourth beast as ten horns, and Nebuchadnezzar on the image as ten toes. The empire in which these ten kingdoms come into existence is the Roman empire. It will have a revival and come into existence again. Then a wicked leader will take the headship of that resurrected Roman empire, and another beast, the false prophet, the Antichrist will domineer over the Jewish people and persecute their saints, the remnant of Israel, while the earth and the dwellers upon the earth experience the great judgments. The last half of these seven years is called the great tribulation. We must also remember that our Lord left behind a great prophecy concerning the end of the age. This prophecy is contained in the Olivet Discourse, the first part of which (Matthew 24:4-44) harmonizes in a striking manner with the events in Revelation 6--19. Our Lord calls special attention to Daniel and likewise speaks of the great tribulation. In our brief annotations we shall point out some of the interesting and convincing details.

The glorious climax is the visible manifestation of the Lord out of heaven, crowned with many crowns, the defeat and overthrow of the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, the binding of Satan, and the reign of Christ with His saints for a thousand years. (Compare Revelation 19:11-21 with Daniel 7:11-14 and Matthew 24:27-31.) After that follows the great white throne judgment, which is the judgment of the wicked dead, the glories of the new Jerusalem, the eternal destiny of the redeemed and the eternal destiny of the lost.

If this last great book of the Bible is studied in this divinely given order it will no longer be, as is so often said, a sealed book. All fanciful interpretations and applications of these great visions to past or present history can no longer be maintained as soon as we reckon with the fact that these visions are not yet fulfilled, and are going to be fulfilled after the true church is no longer on the earth.

The Promised Blessing

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3). A blessing is promised to him who readeth, and who hears and keeps. It does not say that a blessing is for him who understands and knows everything which is in this book. If such were the condition the writer and reader would have no claim on this promised blessing. The Bible teacher, or any other man, who says he knows and understands everything found in this great finale of God’s Word is very much mistaken. We cannot be sure about everything in some of these visions and the full meaning of some may not be understood till the world sees the fulfilment. The blessing is promised to all His people who give attention to the Revelation of Jesus Christ. What is the blessing we may expect through the reading and prayerful study of the words of this prophecy?

First of all we receive through this book a wonderful vision of our Saviour and Lord. This is what we need as His people above everything else, and it is this which brings blessing into our lives. As stated before, this book is preeminently His revelation, a blessed unveiling of His person and glory. But we also get another blessing. In reading through this book we see what is in store for this age, what judgments will overtake the world, and how Satan’s power will be manifested to the full upon those who rejected His grace. Judgment, tribulation and wrath are swiftly coming upon this age. Out of all this our gracious Lord has delivered us. There is no judgment, no wrath for us who know Him as our sin bearer and our hiding-place. Praise must fill our hearts when we read the words of this prophecy and remember the grace which has saved us from all which is coming upon this age. Another blessing is the assurance of ultimate victory and glory. Dark is the age, and becoming darker, but in Revelation we behold the glory which is coming for His saints first of all and after the judgment clouds are gone, for Jerusalem, the nations and the earth. Reading Revelation fills the heart with the assurance and certainty of the outcome of all. It is a solemn atmosphere which fills the whole book of Revelation. As we continue to read and continue to breathe this heavenly and solemn atmosphere it will result in a closer walk with God, a more spiritual worship and a greater and more unselfish service for Him “Who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us priests and kings unto God His Father.”

APPENDIX

Prominent Names and Their Symbolical Meaning in Revelation

Abaddon. (Revelation 9:11) Destruction. The king over the locust army, denoting Satan and his agencies.

Abyss, The. (Revelation 9:1; Revelation 20:1-3) The pit of the abyss or the deep. This expression occurs seven times in Revelation. Out of the deep, the lowest pit, there comes the demon and into the pit of the abyss Satan will be cast for 1000 years. The lake of fire is a different place.

Accuser, The. Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10). His expulsion out of heaven occurs in the middle of the week, followed by the great tribulation on earth.

Alpha. The first letter in the Greek alphabet; Omega is the last letter. Therefore Alpha and Omega is equivalent to an A and Z. Symbolical of the first and last (Revelation 1:8; Revelation 21:6; Revelation 22:13).

Amen, The. A name of our Lord. He is the verily," the truth, and assurance and certainty are expressed by this word (Revelation 1:18).

Angels. Angels are prominently mentioned throughout Revelation. The exposition shows that the angel mentioned in Revelation 8:1-5; Revelation 10:1 is the Lord Jesus Christ. Angels will be used in the end of the age to carry out the decreed judgments. On the angels of the different churches, the symbolical meaning, see the exposition, Revelation 1:20. The angels are the messengers who carried the Lord's message to the churches. They needed the power of the Spirit to do it. Hence the churches were to hear what the Spirit said to the churches (Revelation 2:7, etc.).

Antichrist, The. The final and personal Antichrist is mentioned for the first time in Revelation in Revelation 13:11-18. He is also called the false prophet, because he heads up the ecclesiastical corruption and apostasy of the end of the age. He must not be confounded with the first beast out of the sea who is a political head, the emperor of the revived Roman empire, the little horn of Daniel 7:1-28, and the prince that shall come of Daniel 9:26.

Antipas. An unknown faithful martyr in Pergamos, known to Christ (Revelation 2:13), meaning one against all.

Apollyon. (Revelation 9:11) The Greek name of Abaddon, the King over the Locust army. The name means destruction or destroyer.

Ark, The. (Revelation 11:19) It is seen by John in the temple. It means symbolically the assured presence of Jehovah with His people Israel, the faithful remnant, in the trying times of Jacob's trouble.

Armageddon. Mentioned for the first time in the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh vial, (Revelation 16:12-16). It means "The hill of slaughter." The

battle of Armageddon will be of brief duration. It is the stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream smiting suddenly the ten toes, the ten kingdoms (Daniel 2:1-49). The battle of Armageddon is briefly described in Revelation 19:19-20.

Alleluia. "Praise ye the Lord." The four hallelujahs are found in Revelation 19:1-5.

Babylon. On the literal and mystical Babylon see exposition of Revelation 17:1-18. The literal Babylon will undoubtedly be restored as a city of Influence. But the city mentioned in Revelation 17:1-18 is not the literal Babylon, but Rome. Not only will the Roman Empire be revived, but also papal Rome. Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, will see a great revival. The system in its corruption is described in Revelation 18:1-24.

Balaam. The heathen prophet who could not curse Israel, but put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. Used in Revelation to describe the corruption in the professing Church in giving up the divinely demanded separation from the world (Revelation 2:14).

Beast, The. The expression "four beasts" in Revelation 4:1-11; Revelation 5:1-14, etc., is faulty. The correct rendering is "the four living creatures" or the "four living ones." The term "beast" applies to the revived Roman empire and its head, the little horn of Daniel, also called beast in Daniel's vision. The Antichrist is likewise called a beast. The work of the two beasts is seen in Revelation 13:1-18.

Birds, unclean and hateful. Symbolical of evil persons outwardly professing to be something but full of corruption. They describe the apostate masses of Christendom (Revelation 18:2. Also Matthew 13:31-32).

Black Horse. The black horse comes into view with the opening of the third seal. Black is the color of night, darkness and death.

Blood, with Hail and Fire. Revelation 8:7) Not literal things, but symbols of divine judgment for this earth.

Bow, The. Revelation 6:2) The bow without an arrow as in possession by the rider upon the white horse is the symbol of a bloodless conquest.

Bride, The. Revelation 21:2) the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife Revelation 19:7); it is not Israel but the church.

Brimstone and Fire. The symbols of divine wrath (Isaiah 30:33).

Candlestick, Golden. Symbolical of that which gives light. Representing the seven assemblies. The Church is on earth to give light.

Crowns. The symbols of given glory and also rewards for service. The crowns seen upon the seven heads of the dragon Revelation 12:3) and upon the four horns of the Beast Revelation 13:1) denote despotic authority.

David, Key of. Symbolical of the right to open and to enter in. See Isaiah 22:22. It is a prediction concerning Christ. The authority of the kingdom of heaven.

David, Root and Offspring. Revelation 22:16) Christ is the Root and offspring of David.

Demons. Fallen spirit beings; the wicked spirits over which Satan is the head. They will be worshipped by the apostates during the end of the age. Demon-worship is even now going on to some extent, for the Antichristian cults are produced by demons (1 Timothy 4:1). See Revelation 9:20-21. The word devils must be changed to demons. There is but one devil, but legions of demons.

Dwellers on the Earth. This class mentioned repeatedly in Revelation is the large number of professing Christians, who did not receive the love of the truth and rejecting the gospel follow the strong delusion and are utterly blinded, as well as hardened, during the tribulation.

Eagle. Revelation 8:13) The word angel must be changed to “eagle.” Symbolical of the coming judgment, as an eagle is a bird of prey. Eagle’s wings Revelation 12:13-17) are symbolical of swift motion, escape and deliverance.

Earth. The prophetic territory of the Roman Empire is mostly described by this form, though the entire earth is also indicated.

Earthquake. Symbolical of the shaking of all political and ecclesiastical institutions. But, as we show in our exposition, literal earthquakes will take place.

Elders, Twenty-four. The twenty-four elders typify all the redeemed in glory. Old and New Testament saints are included. After Revelation 19:1-21 this term does not appear again, because the Church, the bride of Christ, is then seen separate from the entire company of the redeemed, and takes her exalted position as the Lamb’s wife.

Eternal State, The. The eternal state is described in Revelation 21:1-8.

Euphrates. This great river is mentioned twice in Revelation, 9:14 and Revelation 16:12. It is the boundary line of the Roman empire and the land of Israel. See exposition of these passages.

Everlasting Gospel. Revelation 14:6 The declaration of the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation, and the proclamation of God as Creator to the heathen nations of the world, to prepare them for the gospel of the kingdom.

Fire. Often mentioned in this book and symbolical of the judgments which will be executed upon the earth as well as the everlasting wrath upon the unsaved.

Fornication. Spiritual wickedness in departing from the Truth of God, followed by the literal lusts of the flesh. The days of Lot will be on the earth before the Son of Man cometh.

Four. This number appears a number of times in Revelation. Four living creatures; four corners of the earth; four horns of the golden altar; four angels; four winds. Four is the number of universality.

Frogs. Mentioned between the sixth and seventh vial. Symbolical of demon influences, denoting filthy and wicked things. Frogs come out of slimy and dark waters; evil doctrines.

Glass, Sea of. Revelation 4:6). Compare with Exodus 30:18-21 and 1 Kings 7:23, etc. Symbolical of fixed lasting holiness. No more water needed for cleansing from sin, for the saints in glory are delivered from the presence of sin itself.

God, Supper of. Revelation 19:17) Symbolical of God's judgment upon the wicked nations and the earth dwellers.

Gold. Symbolical of divine righteousness.

Grass. Revelation 8:7 Symbolical of human prosperity (Isaiah 40:7 and 1 Peter 1:24).

Hades. The region of disembodied spirits; literally "the unknown." Christ has the keys. Hades with death, because they came into existence through sin, will be cast into the lake of fire.

Harvest of the Earth. The harvest is the end of the age. In Revelation 14:14-15 we read of the Lord's judgment dealing with the earth.

Hidden Manna. Revelation 2:17) Symbolical of the reward those who overcome will receive from the Lord.

Horns. Horn is symbolical of power. Horns mean typically kings, and powers and kingdoms (Daniel 7:24).

Image of the Beast. Revelation 13:12-15) Compare with Daniel 3:1-30. It will be a literal image of the princely leader of the revived Roman empire, the first beast, which John saw rising out of the sea.

Islands. Mentioned under the sixth seal and the seventh vial. Mountains typify kingdoms and governments; islands are symbolical of smaller and isolated governments. All will be affected. No doubt when the great earthquakes will shake the very foundations of the earth, many islands will also disappear.

Jasper. A precious stone, most likely our diamond. See exposition of Revelation 4:1-11.

Jerusalem. The earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem are mentioned in the book. During the tribulation the earthly Jerusalem will be the seat of the Antichrist, the false prophet. Jerusalem is for this reason called “Sodom and Egypt” Revelation 11:8). Then Jerusalem will pass through her worst history. A great siege will take place at the close of the tribulation period and the city will fall (Zechariah 14:1-21). After that Jerusalem will become the capital of the kingdom of Christ and a great temple will be erected, the universal place of worship during the millennium. The heavenly Jerusalem is above the earth. From there the glorious reign of Christ and the saints will be executed. This glorious city will come down out of heaven at the end of the millennium to find its eternal resting-place on the new earth (chapters 21-22).

Jezebel. Symbolical of the Papacy. The corruptress which claims to be the bride of Christ, but plays the harlot. See chapters 2 and 17.

Judgment. Judgment falls upon the earth during the seven years, which constitute the end of the age. When the Lord comes in His glory the great judgment of the nations takes place. Revelation 19:11, etc., compare with Matthew 25:31. After the millennium the second resurrection takes place and the great white throne judgment is the judgment of the wicked dead.

King of the Nations. Revelation 15:2-4) King of the saints should be changed to King of the nations. Our Lord is the King of the nations, the King of Kings.

Lake of Fire. The place which God has prepared for the devil and his angels. The beast and the false prophet will be cast there; also the Assyrian, the king of the north, the nations who followed the beast and all the wicked dead. Death and Hades will likewise be put into that place.

The Lamb. The Lamb (John 1:29), our Lord in His sacrificial character, is mentioned twenty-eight times in the Revelation. The Lamb is worshipped by all. Thus we find the song of the Lamb, the throne of the Lamb and the marriage of the Lamb, and the wife of the Lamb (the Church) in this book.

Lightning. Symbolical of the divine judgment, Wrath.

Locust Army. Symbolical of the host of demons, which come out of the abyss to torment mankind.

Lord's Day, The. Mentioned but once in 1:10. It is the first day of the week on which John saw the great Patmos vision.

Man-child. (Revelation 12:1-17) The Man-child is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark of the Beast. Some special mark which declares ownership. As the Holy Spirit seals those who trust on Christ, so Antichrist will put his mark upon those who follow him.

Millennium, The. Millennium means “a thousand years.” Six times this period of blessing and glory is mentioned in Revelation 20:1-15.

Moon as blood. The Moon is symbolical of derived authority. Blood is the symbol of death. Apostate Israel and the apostate Church passing through the most severe judgments are symbolized by this figure.

Morning Star, The. Christ in His coming for the Church Revelation 22:16; Revelation 2:28).

Mountain. A kingdom.

Mountains, Seven. Rome is the city built upon the seven hills. See exposition of Revelation 17:1-18.

Nicolaitanes. Mentioned in the message of Ephesus and Pergamos. They signify the domineering, priestly class which assumed an unscriptural place of authority in the Church.

Palms. Emblems of victory.

Rainbow. The symbol of covenant and of mercy. Mentioned twice. Around the throne (Revelation 4:1-11) and around His head (Revelation 10:1-11).

Rest of the Dead. Revelation 20:5) Meaning those who had not part in the first resurrection, hence the wicked dead.

River of Life. (Revelation 22:1) Symbolical of the fullness of life, glory and blessing.

Saints. The saints in Revelation include all the saints. The Old and New Testament saints are seen under the figure of the twenty-four elders. The suffering saints are the Jewish saints and the remnant of Israel, as well as the multitude of nations, who accept the final message and come out of the great tribulation (Revelation 7:1-17).

Satan. The entire book reveals his person, his work and his destiny. His work may be traced in the church-messages. Then we have his work during the tribulation and his final work after the millennium.

Scorpions. Symbolical of the torment caused by the army of demons under the fifth trumpet judgment.

Sea. Symbol of the nations. Also the literal sea, which gives up the dead. Then there will be no more sea, All wickedness and restlessness will cease forever.

Seven. The divine number. No other book in the Bible contains so many “sevens” as this final Bible book, the Revelation. There are seven angels, churches, attributes of the Lord, heads, horns, eyes, spirits, lamps, seals, trumpets, vials, plagues, stars, thunders, times and a sevenfold doxology.

Song. The songs of the redeemed and the song of Moses and the Lamb are mentioned in the book.

Stars. See exposition on the meaning of the seven stars in His hand. Stars are also symbolical of lesser authorities, which will all fall during the tribulation period. Lights in the night.

Sun. The symbol of supreme authority.

Synagogue of Satan. Mentioned in the messages to Smyrna and Philadelphia. It means a Judaized Christianity as seen in ritualistic, professing Christendom.

Temple. The tribulation temple is in view in Revelation 11:1-3. The millennial temple is seen in Revelation 7:15. Then there is the temple of heaven (Revelation 16:17). In the heavenly Jerusalem there is no temple (Revelation 21:22).

Third Part. Mentioned in connection with men, the sea, the stars of heaven, the sun and the moon. It probably refers exclusively to the Roman Empire, which in its different aspects and authorities, will be affected during these judgments.

Two horns. The beast out of the land has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like the dragon. He is the counterfeit Christ.

Waters, Many. Symbolical of peoples and nations over which the Romish whore has authority.

White. Colour of righteousness and purity; also denoting victorious conquests. We have in Revelation, white robes, the white horses, white linen, a white cloud and a white throne.

Witnesses. See in Revelation 11:1-19 about the two witnesses.

Wrath. We read of the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb. The wrath of God is completed with the pouring out of the vials. The wrath of the Lamb will be executed when He comes in glory.

Zion. Mentioned only once in Revelation 14:1. It means the literal Zion in Palestine. Upon that holy hill of Zion the glory will rest during the millennium. See Psalms 132:13-14.

The Division of the Revelation

Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

I. THE PATMOS VISION OF THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN (1)

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE. THE SEVEN CHURCH MESSAGES REVEALING THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH (2-3)

III. THE THINGS WHICH ARE AFTER THESE, THE END OF THE AGE, THE CONSUMMATION AND THE FINAL MESSAGES (4-22)

First Division: The Heavenly Scene and Before the Throne (4-5)

Second Division: The Opening of the Seven Seals (6-8:5)

Between the Sixth and Seventh Seal: A Parenthetical Vision (7)

Third Division: The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets (8:6-11:18)

Between the Sixth and Seventh Trumpets: Parenthetical Visions (10-11:14)

Fourth Division: Satan's Power and Satan's Masterpieces (11:19-13)

Fifth Division: The Power of God in Intervention: Grace and judgment Manifested (14)

Sixth Division: The Seven Angels Having Seven Plagues and the Vials of Wrath (15-16)

Between the Sixth and Seventh Vial, Parenthetical Vision (16:13-16)

Seventh Division: The Great Harlot, Babylon, and her judgment (17-18)

Eighth Division: The Manifestation of the King and the Millennium (19-20:6)

Ninth Division: After the Thousand Years and the Vision of the New Jerusalem (20:7-22:5)

Tenth Division: The Final Messages (22:6-21)

Important Topics of Symbols and Interpretations

by Rev. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.

The Sacred Seven Sevens of Revelation

1. The Seven Churches	Revelation 2: 1 3:22
2. The Seven Seals	Revelation 6: 1 – 8: 1
3. The Seven Trumpets	Revelation 8: 2 – 11:19
4. The Seven Dignitaries	Revelation 12: 1 – 13: 18
The woman	Revelation 12: 1-2
The dragon	Revelation 12: 3-4
The Man Child	Revelation 12: 5
The Archangel Michael	Revelation 12: 7
The remnant	Revelation 12: 17
The beast out of the sea	Revelation 13: 1-8
The beast out of the earth	Revelation 13: 11-18
5. The Seven Bowls	Revelation 15: 1 – 16:21
6. The Seven Dooms	Revelation 17: 1 – 20: 15
Ecclesiastical Babylon	Revelation 17: 1-18

Political Babylon	Revelation 18: 1-24
Antichrist and the false prophets	Revelation 19: 20
Antichristian nations	Revelation 19: 21
Gog and Magog	Revelation 20: 8-9
Satan	Revelation 20: 10
The wicked dead	Revelation 20: 11-15

7. The Seven New Things	Revelation 21: 1 – 22: 21
New heavens	Revelation 21: 1
New earth	Revelation 21: 1
New city	Revelation 21: 9-23
New nations	Revelation 21: 24-27
New river	Revelation 22: 1
New tree	Revelation 22: 2
New throne	Revelation 22: 3-5

Scheme of the Seven Seals

The Seven Seals	Revelation	Matthew
1. Religious deception	6: 3-4	24: 4-5
2. War	6: 3-4	24: 6-7
3. Famine	6: 5-6	24: 7
4. Disease epidemics	6: 7-8	24: 7
5. Tribulation and persecution	6: 9 -11	24: 8-12, 21-22
6. Heavenly signs	6: 12 -17	24: 29
7. Still to be opened ¹	8: 1 – 2	Luke 21: 25-26

¹ Let us now return to the mainstream of the prophecy, back to the seals. The 7th seal, remember, has still to be opened. Chapter seven was inserted between the 6th and 7th seals simply because that is when the sealing work will occur in the stream of time. But once the 144,000 are sealed, the four angels standing at the four corners of the earth are allowed to release the four winds which will *hurt the earth, the sea and the trees*. The hurting of the earth, the sea and the trees is in fact the beginning of the 7th seal. The 7th seal is divided into seven sub-sections, each introduced by a Trumpet blast. The seven Trumpets, in other words, constitute the 7th seal; they are the 7th seal in terrifying detail. Remember this important point, for great confusion will result if the seven seals and the seven trumpets are treated as two separate prophecies. The 7th seal is introduced with these words: “*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.* (Revelation 8: 1-2)” (KJV)



The Four Horsemen in Chapter Six

The "four horses" are the opening of the first four seals. Jesus is showing what has happened and what was going to happen to the early church, which was 'universal', the only Catholic Church of the first century after Christ (not the Roman Catholic Church as we know it today). His interest is to receive a group of people for his "bride" which will be finished by the end of the sixth seal. The seventh seal is not yet unveiled.

The first four seals are conditions of time that existed in which changes came upon Christianity. These changes made a great impact on the salvation of the individuals in each condition. The riders represent the leaders, the horses represent the divided churches, caused by worldliness. Only the white horse represents the real Church built on the true and unaltered teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Song of Solomon 1:9: "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots." (KJV)

Zechariah 10:3: "Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle." (KJV)

The opening of the first seal begins with a noise of thunder. This was the opening of the new born church on the day of Pentecost. The one-hundred twenty people were speaking with the voice of the new born church. By the Holy Ghost they were speaking in another tongue.

The early apostles and the ministry under them had the pure understanding of what the Constitutional Church of Christ doctrine was to accomplish in the lives of the people. The overcoming life, absolutely pure, faultless, sinless living conditions, was the white condition, pure peace. This was done for a short period of time representing the "**WHITE HORSE**."

The opening of the second seal begins when men start to create their own ways of living. Paul said, "there is no other gospel." But, that did not stop them because sin was the ruling element in their lives. This was the "**RED HORSE**" as in **Isaiah 1**. Red represents sin. This brought on a civil war within the church. There were men fighting to gain control and some who were standing for Christ.

Paul said in **Acts 20:29-30**,

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

This war was taking the peace away from the Constitutional Church of Christ. Their "sword" was the word of God used in their own selfish ways.

The opening of the third seal begins when the church (*Constitutional Church of Christ*) continues to lose truth after truth. When no one is around to show them the way to live, all that is left is the written word. Year after year less is understood. They now have a little bit of truth compared to a great deal of untruth. Their minds are darkened by sin. This represents the "**BLACK HORSE**." The people became separated.

The opening of the fourth seal is when the church is in its worst condition. The Constitutional Church of Christ, the one and only church, became more unnatural, not Christ-like at all. It became deathly. All other religions became a part of this system. Its rules were so harsh that they killed all those that did not believe in this union or the authority of their leaders.

II Timothy 2:9:

"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

The last represents the "**PALE HORSE.**"

Scheme of the Seven Trumpets

The Seven Trumpets

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Destruction of vegetation | Revelation 8: 7 |
| 2. Devastation of oceans and sea life | Revelation 8: 8-9 |
| 3. Devastation of rivers and fresh waters | Revelation 8: 10-11 |
| 4. Sun, moon and stars darkened | Revelation 8: 12 |
| 5. Torturous human afflictions | Revelation 9: 13-19 |
| 6. Enormous military destruction | Revelation 9: 13-19 |
| 7. Seven last plagues | Revelation 15: 1; 16: 1-21 |

Armageddon and Return of Jesus Christ

Here follows a first impression of the Book of Revelation:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Introductory | Chapter 1 |
| 2. Epistolary | Chapters 2 and 3 |
| 3. Apocalyptic - Premillennial | Chapters 4 - 18 |
| 4. Apocalyptic - Millennial | Chapters 19: 1 – 20: 6 |
| 5. Apocalyptic - Postmillennial | Chapter 20: 7 - 20 |

Part One: Introduction

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chapter 1: 1 - 3 | Introduction |
| Verses 1 - 2 | The nature of the book |
| Verse 3 | The purpose of the book |
| Chapter 1: 4-8 | Salutation of the human author |
| Verse 4a | The author and addressees of the book |
| Verses 4b - 8 | Benediction from the Trinitarian God. |

Note 1. Under the heading "Introductory" we have said enough about authorship above. The opening three first verses of chapter one are a foreword.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1: 1 – 3)" (KJV)

Whose revelation is this? Obviously, the reference here is to Jesus Christ considered as to His human nature and as man as well. From where did He receive this revelation? For whom was it given to Him? And, for what purpose with reference to them? To which one of His servants was it representatively sent? In addition, through what agency? What did this servant do with the revelation committed in such a way to him (verse 2) ? Ponder on this before going any further.

The expression in verse 1, “which must shortly come to pass,” has puzzled many, and given rise to the opinion that the predictions in this book have largely been fulfilled in connection with the course of history from that time. It is thought, however, that while some of them have been fulfilled in the particular of the seven churches of Asia , the bulk of them are still future in that respect. “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years.” So, works the universe, so works nature.

Prophetic statements often apply to more than one fulfilment, which we could call a “duality.” A prime example of duality is Christ’s first coming to atone for our sins through His death on the cross of Calvary; and, His second coming to rule as King of Kings.

Such double themes are common in biblical prophecy. Jesus specifically alluded to the double application of some prophecies in Matthew 17: 11-12:

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. (Matthew 17: 11-12)” (KJV)

The prophecy of ‘Elijah’ preceded the coming of the Messiah:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4: 5)” (KJV)

Here Jesus answered, as quoted above, in Matthew 17: 11-12.

The disciples understood that “Elijah” who had come already was John the Baptist:

“Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17: 13)” (KJV)

Jesus Himself explained that John the Baptist was already dead at the time He pronounced these words, the forerunner’s fulfilment of Malachi’s prophecy.

Another prophecy with double application is Jesus’ Olivet prophecy (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21), so named because he gave it on the Mount Olivet, overlooking Jerusalem. Many conditions described in this prophecy existed during the days leading to the Romans’ siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. However, Christ makes it perfectly clear that similar conditions would exist shortly before His return.

Another example of double fulfilment is in references to the ‘Day of the Lord’ such as in Isaiah 13: 6:

“Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. (Isaiah 13: 6)” (KJV)

Verse 1 of the selfsame chapter identifies the time setting as when the Babylonian Empire threatened the kingdom of Judah (Babylon invaded Judah and captured Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E.), and it is in this situation that Isaiah wrote that “the day of the Lord is at hand!” Time setting:

“The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see. (Isaiah 13: 1)” (KJV)

Here again, he mentioned the Day of the Lord in verse 9:

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. (Isaiah 13: 9)” (KJV)

His inspired words, show also that Isaiah is writing about the time of the end:

“For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her

place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. (Isaiah 13: 10-13)" (KJV)

We must always carefully ponder on the context of prophecies to really understand their meaning and discern whether the prophecy seems incomplete after its first fulfilment. It is even more important to avoid reading double meanings into passages that do not hold such interpretation. We should be aware, taking great care to properly discern whether double meaning is a factor in any particular prophecy. Sometimes we may recognise a prophecy's fulfilment only after it is well under way or has already taken place.

Note 2. The salutation follows the preface.

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Revelation 1: 4-8)" (KJV)

The seven churches in Asia therein addressed and afterward named, were probably those over which John at this time had some particular charge. However, as others have been tremendously careful to say, it were a mistake to suppose that the readers of this book were limited to the members of those churches. In reality, the number seven itself can hardly have been chosen except as symbolical of universality, according to Johns practice throughout the book.

Speaking further of the numbers used in this book, it may appear that seven is that of perfection or completion. In the several series of God's judgments, each complete in itself, seven is the number of the seals, trumpets, thunders and vials. Four is the number of earthly or physical extension; four seals, four trumpets, so on and forth, in each case complete the number of judgments consisting in physical visitations. Twelve is the number belonging to Israel, or the church, and maybe both. For sure, the latter observation may be true where twice 'twelve' are referred to as in the number of the elders. The heavenly city has twelve gates and on them the names of the twelve tribes; the more, it has twelve foundations corresponding to twelve apostles. The half of the mystic seven is also a ruling

number in the book. Three and a half days are mentioned, and three and a half years, but of this more shall be said later.

Observe in the salutation the evident allusion to the trinity. “Him which is, and which was, and which is to come,” God the Father; “The seven spirits before his throne,” God the Holy Spirit; “Jesus Christ the faithful witness,” God the Son. For the seven spirits in the Book of Isaiah read:

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (Isaiah 11: 2 – 5)” (KJV)

Outline of the Book of Revelation – Chapters 1 to 18

Part 1 – The things seen – the Patmos Vision

Chapter 1: 9-20

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Verses 9 - 11 | The circumstances |
| Verses 12 - 16 | The vision itself |
| Verses 17 - 18 | John’s response to the vision |
| Verse 19 | The key to all the visions of the book of Revelation |
| Verse 20. | The meaning of the first vision |

Part 2 – Chapters 2 - 3 The things that are – the Church of Christ Age

Chapter 2: 1-7

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| Verses 4 - 5 | Complaint and warning |
| Verses 6 - 7 | Praise and promise |

Chapter 2: 8 - 11

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Verses 8 - 9 | The persecution |
| Verses 10 - 11 | The encouragement |

Chapter 2: 12 - 17

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Verses 12 - 13 | Where Satan’s throne was |
|----------------|--------------------------|

Verse 14 The doctrine of Balaam
Verse 15 The doctrine of Nicolaitans
Verses 16 - 17 Warning and promise

Chapter 2: 18 - 29
Verses 18 - 23 Commendation and complaint
Verses 24 - 29 Promise to the overcomer

Chapter 3: 1 - 6
Verses 1 - 3 Dead belief
Verses 4 - 6 Blotting names out of the book of life

Chapter 3: 7 - 13
Verses 7 - 9 An open door of witness
Verses 10 - 13 Kept from the hour of difficulty

Chapter 3: 14 - 22
Verses 14 - 19 Intolerable lukewarmness
Verses 20 - 22 Christ shut out

Part 3 – Chapters 4 - 22 **The things which shall be hereafter**

Chapters 4 - 5 **The divine throne in heaven**
The two chapters introduce the source of the visions and judgments that are consequently to follow. The abode is in heaven and the chief personage is Jesus Christ. Chronologically, the book begins with chapter six.

Chapter 4: 1 - 5
Verse 1 The heavenly door
Verses 2 - 5 The heavenly throne

**Chapter 4: 6; and
verses 10 - 11** **The twenty-four elders**

Chapter 4: 6 - 11
Verses 6 - 8 Their identity
Verses 8 - 11 Their worship

Chapter 5: 1- 4
Verse 1 **The seven-sealed book**
What the book is.

Verses 2 - 4	Who is worthy to open it
Chapter 5: 5 - 10	The one worthy to open the book
Verses 5 - 6	The Lion of the tribe of Judah
Verses 7 - 10	His sublime action
Chapter 5: 11 - 14	Universal worship of the lamb
Verses 11 - 12	Worship of the heavenly beings
Verses 13 - 14	Participation of all creation
Chapters 6: 1 – 8:5	The seven-sealed book opened
Chapter 6: 1 - 17	Seals one to six
Verses 1 - 4	Seals one and two
Verses 5 - 8	Seals three and four
Verses 9 - 11	Seal five
Verses 12 - 17	Seal six
Chapter 7	Is a first deviation from the subject
Chapter 7: 1 - 8	The sealing of Israelites
Verses 1 - 3	A remnant of Israel preserved
Verses 4 - 8	The number of sealed Israelites specified
Chapter 7: 9 - 17	The Salvation of Gentiles
Verses 9 - 14	Elect (<i>converted</i>) Gentiles preserved
Verses 15 - 17	Their kingdom blessing assured
Chapter 8: 1 - 15	Seal seven
Verse 1	Seal seven opened
Verses 2 - 5	The faithful prayer of the saints answered.
Chapter 8: 6 – 11: 19	The seven trumpets blown
Chapter 8: 6 - 13	Trumpets one to four
Verse 7	Trumpet one
Verses 8 - 9	Trumpet two
Verses 10 - 11	Trumpet three
Verses 12 - 13	Trumpet four
Chapter 9: 1 - 12	The fifth trumpet – the first woe
Verse 1	The Abyss opened
Verses 2 - 12	The loosing of myriads of demons

Chapter 9: 13 - 21	The sixth trumpet – the second woe
Verses 13 - 19	Gathered armies loosed
Verses 20 - 21	The purpose of the woe
Chapters 10: 1 – 11: 13	Is the second deviation of the subject
Chapter 10: 1 - 7	The angel and the little scroll
Verses 1 - 6	The identity of the mighty angel
Verse 7	The mystery of God fulfilled
Chapter 10: 8 - 11	John and the little scroll
Verses 10: 8 - 10	What the little scroll is
Verse 11	Its effect on John's ministry
Chapter 11: 1 - 2	The end of the times of the Gentiles
Verses 1 – 2a	Restoration of temple worship
Verse 2b	End of the times of the Gentiles
Chapter 11: 3 - 13	The two witnesses
Verses 3 - 7	Their identity
Verses 8 - 13	Their destiny
Chapter 11: 14 - 19	The seventh trumpet – the third woe
Verses 14 - 18	Anticipation of Christ's worldwide kingdom
Verse 19	God's temple in heaven opened
Chapters 12 - 13	Seven personages performing during the last days of the tribulation
Chapter 12: 1 - 2	Personage one – the woman, Israel
Verse 1	The woman
Verse 2	The woman's travail
Chapter 12: 3 - 4	Personage two – the dragon, Satan
Verse 3	Dragon in prophetic view
Verse 4	The dragon in historical perspective
Chapter 12: 5 - 6	Personage three – the male child, Christ
Verse 5	The male child
Verse 6	The woman's flight

Chapter 12: 7 - 12	Personage four – Michael, the Archangel
Verses 7 - 9	Michael
Verses 10 - 12	Rejoicing over Satan's expulsion
Chapter 12: 13 - 16	Satan persecutes the woman
Verses 13 - 14	Reason for Satan's persecution
Verses 15 - 16	Israel's preservation
Chapter 12: 17	Personage five – the Israelite remnant
Verse 17	The godly remnant
Chapter 13: 1 - 10	The beast out of the sea
Verses 1 - 5	The beast – the Roman Prince or Hierarch
Verses 6 - 10	The beast's wicked vocation
Chapter 13: 11 - 18	Personage seven – the beast out of the earth, the false prophet

Note 3. The salutation is followed by a revelation of the preparatory vision which John received, and which constitutes his authority to write.

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and

poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3: 8-20)" (KJV)

Symbolisms

This vision was that of the person of the glorified Christ into the details of which it is beyond our region to go; however, those who would like to study the **symbolism** of the passage more deeply may be helped by the following passages:

Candlesticks

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1: 20)

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15: Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5: 14-16)

Clothing

And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. (Isaiah 11: 5)

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. (Ephesians 6:14)

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of

salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.
(Isaiah 61: 10)

White head and hair

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. (Daniel 7: 9)

saints. (Revelation 19: 8)

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. (Matthew 17: 1-2)

And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. (Acts 22: 6-8)

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 2 Peter 1: 16-18)

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle,

neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22: 5)

Eyes of fire

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power , and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. (2 Timothy 1: 7-8)

For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12: 29)

Feet of brass

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. (Proverbs 1: 24-28)

Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass.
(Isaiah 48: 4)

Voice of many waters

His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. (Daniel

When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. (Luke 13: 25-27)

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the

10: 6)

throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. (Revelation 14: 2-3)

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (Revelation 19: 6)

Seven stars

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12: 3)

For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 2: 7)

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1: 20)

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. (Revelation 12: 1)

Two-edged sword

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6: 17)

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4: 12)

Keys (the keys)

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:

Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. (Isaiah 22: 20-22)

and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16: 19)

Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. (Luke 11: 52)

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. (Revelation 3: 7-8)

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (Revelation 20: 1)

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (Matthew 28: 18)

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. (John 20: 22-23)

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. (1

Corinthians 12: 4)

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12: 8)

Part Two: Epistolary

There are those regarding the epistolary portion of this book, chapters two and three, as giving in the form of letters to the seven churches, a prophetic outline of “the decline and approaching judgment of corporate Gentile Christianity (Christendom).” Those who remember the teaching of the seven parables of Matthew 13, will need no explanation of this remark, but will recall at once the distinction between Christianity (Christendom) and the TRUE CHURCH, or the body of Christ.

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are

your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the

tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13: 1-58)" (KJV)

The Seven Churches

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2: 7)" (KJV)

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angel of seven churches, and

the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches. (Revelation 1:20)" Jesus Christ appears to John and messages to each of angels of the churches, which are cited in order of their importance as:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Ephesus (Efes) | Revelation 1:11, 2:1-7, Acts 18:19-28, 19:1-41,
Ephesians |
| • Smyrna (Izmir) | Revelation 2:8-11 |
| • Pergamum (Bergama) | Revelation 2:12-17 |
| • Thyatira (Akkisar) | Revelation 2:18-29, Acts 16:14 |
| • Sardis (Sart) | Revelation 3:1-6 |
| • Philadelphia (Alasehir) | Revelation 3:7-13 |
| • Laodicea (Eskihisar) | Revelation 3:14-22, Colossians 2:1, 4:13-16 |

Ephesus (Efes) is vividly alluded to in Acts 19-20 in connection with Paul's extended ministry at Ephesus. The apostle Paul is believed to have spent two and a half years in Ephesus during his third missionary journey, until a riot forced him to leave the city rapidly. Some authorities believe that Paul was imprisoned in the so called Prison of Paul in Ephesus. Eventually, the belief in Christ and the veneration of his Blessed Mother replaced the worship of Artemis and the other deities.

Ephesus was the site of the third ecumenical council in 431 AD, at which the question of the Mary being the mother of God was debated. In this council it was decided that Christ had a double nature as God and man, and the Mary was theotokos (god bearer).

The second pilgrimage centre for Christians, also home to Mary and John. In 431 A.D., the second ecumenical council convened in the church of the Virgin Mary. The same church is also known as one of the "Seven Churches of the Apocalypse". There is also a Basilica where John was buried and nearby is Bülbül mountain where the house of the Mary the mother of Jesus is located. There is a foundation in front of the Odeum of the city. It is thought to be the foundation of an ancient temple that was later converted into a church. A bull's head carved in the doorjamb once led people to believe that this was the tomb of the Apostle and Evangelist Luke since the bull's head was an ancient symbol for him. When Paul returned from Corinth to Ephesus, he stayed briefly in the city and talked the people of Ephesus in the synagogue where he was asked to stay longer. He promised and said : "I shall come back to you if it is God's will" (Acts 18:18-20) and he left Ephesus for Phoenicia and Jerusalem. On his next journey to Ephesus, St. Paul stayed longer and taught to his followers all the details of the Christian faith, during this two year period.

His relation with the locals started to go bitter when he preached that "gods made by human hands are not gods at all" (Acts 19:26). After a public speech in the great amphitheatre, the angry citizens of Ephesus reacted violently, led by Demetrius, a leader of the silversmiths. Paul was saved from the uproar of the people by the city clerk. However, it was apparent to Paul that he had better leave the city as soon as possible. Calling his followers together, he said goodbye to them with words of encouragement and set off for Macedonia (Acts 19:28, 20:1). The apostle Paul returned to Ephesus later. John came to Ephesus in 40 A.D. with the Mary, the mother of Jesus. They lived here until their deaths. He presided over the churches of Asia in the later years of his life and was buried where the church of St. John now stands on Ayasuluk hill. During the reign of Byzantine's emperor Justinian, the church was made into a cathedral. Some of its collapsed columns have been set up again recently. Besides the nave, there is a baptistery and a small chapel with some frescoes. John's tomb is still there.

John wrote the following words to the people of Ephesus and the church in Ephesus:

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2: 1-7)" (KJV)

Smyrna (Izmir) is one of the oldest cities of the Mediterranean world and has been of almost continuous historical importance during the last 5,000 years. Excavations indicate settlement contemporary with that of the first city of Troy, dating from the 3rd millennium B.C.E.

Thereafter, the city developed into one of the wealthiest poleis of the region, vying with Ephesus and Myletus for the title "first city of Asia.". At the time when Polycarp became its bishop, the city's population was close to a hundred

thousand people. Marble crosses found in the Agora indicate the existence of a sixth-century church. John's letter in the Revelation shows that there was also a synagogue in Smyrna in the first century.

The history of Smyrna goes back to the 3rd millennium B.C.E In the 10th century B.C.E Ionians occupied the city. The famous geographer Strabo tells us that as that of Ephesus, the Amazons were the founders of the city. Lydians conquered and devastated the city in the 7th century B.C. The city was re-established after Alexander the Great expelled Persians from Western Anatolia. Then the control of the city was shifted to Pergamum and finally to Rome. This was when a number of majestic buildings were erected in the city. 178 A.D. became the year of destruction for Smyrna; a major earthquake destroyed nearly every building in the city. Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius reconstructed Smyrna. The worst time in the history of the city was when the Arab raids started in the 7th century. The Seljuk period and crusaders followed this. Finally, in the 15th century Ottomans took over.

The commercial activities flourished again. The city was considered as an important port-city of Asia Minor during Ottoman period and attracted many European traders. Now, it is still one of the most important port-cities of Turkey. The famous bishop of Christian church, Polycarp served in Smyrna between 115 to 156 A.D. He and eleven other Christians from Philadelphia were burned at the stake in 156 A.D. during the persecution of Christians in Smyrna. He was a good transmitter and follower of the early traditions of Christian faith. In his letter to the Christians of Smyrna, 60 years before Polycarp's massacre, John wrote :

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2: 8-11)” (KJV)

Pergamos/Pergamum (Bergama). When king Attalus III died without an heir, he bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans, under whom the city retained its position as the preeminent artistic and intellectual center of Anatolia but declined in political and economic importance. The city went through the Arab,

Byzantine and finally the Turkish period in the 14th century. Pergamum attained a high culture in the Hellenistic Age

This small Ionian city was not known well until 399 B.C. It was first mentioned in connection with Lysimachos, a general of Alexander the Great and protector of the city. During emperor Eumenes II (197-159 B.C.), the city signed an agreement with Rome and extended its influence to the Taurus mountains in the south. In 133 B.C., Attalus III willed the empire to Rome because of lack of heir to the throne. Under his administration, the population of Pergamum reached 140,000 people. The famous doctor of antiquity, Galen worked in Asklepieion (sanatorium) of Pergamum and wrote at least 500 medical books. Only during the Christian period, the famous Serapis temple was converted into a basilica and dedicated to John. This church of Pergamum was one of the seven apocalyptic churches of Asia Minor.

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2: 12-17)” (KJV)

Sardis (Sart) The ruins of Sardis can be divided into four areas: the Acropolis on Bozdağı (Mount Tomolos), the Pactolos Valley where the Artemis Temple was built, the city located on both sides of the modern highway between Ankara and Izmir and finally "Bintepeler" (the Thousand Hills) consisting of hundreds of Lydian tombs. Sardis was the capital of famous kingdom of Lydia. Lydians were powerful and creative leaders in the fields of commerce and economics. Sardis was ruled by Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C.E. and then by the Roman Empire in the 2nd century B.C.E. The ruins to the north of the highway are what were then public toilets, gymnasium and a synagogue.

To the south of the synagogue was the main road of the city which had various shops, including a hardware store and a paint shop. The road once formed the

westernmost stretch of the Royal Road. These ruins are of Byzantine period and have been dated the 4th century AD. The Synagogue is from the 3rd century AD and once was a part of the gymnasium and restored to be a synagogue. Sardis has the largest known ancient synagogue. Its size and grandeur are a testimony to the prosperity of the Jews in Sardis during Roman times and to their eminent position in the city. It was probably not originally planned to be a synagogue as it has a very different layout. It faces the direction of Jerusalem and the entrance is also from the same side through three gates, which open from the courtyard into the main assembly hall. After entering, one has to turn back to see the two shrines between the gates. At the opposite end of the hall there is a semicircular apse with three rows of marble seats which were thought to be for the elders. The floors were mostly covered with mosaics.

The Gymnasium is a large complex consisting of a palaestra next to the synagogue, colonnades on three sides and the main building with the recently-restored ornate facade. According to its inscription, it was dedicated by the people of Sardis to Geta and Caracalla, the sons of Septimus Severus and to their mother Julia Domna. It was a complex of symmetrically arranged rooms. The temple of Artemis next to the Pactolus river (Sart çayı) dates from the 4th century B.C. There was a temple dedicated to goddess Kybele before that during the time of King Croesus. This one was destroyed by Athenians during the revolt of Ionians against the Persian rule. Then Alexander the Great ordered a new one, the temple of Artemis, on the same site. In fact, only the temple of Kybele was destroyed not the spirit of this important Anatolian goddess. She continued to live in the form of Artemis! The Artemis Temple is located in the Pactolos Valley and was one of the seven largest ancient temples with eight columns at each end and twenty along each side. It was believed that an altar dedicated to Artemis had existed there as early as the 5th century B.C.E. The temple was built in stages, the first part being constructed in 300 B.C.E. Later further construction took place in the 2nd century BC. Again only part of the project was completed.

The third stage started in the 2nd century AD. At this stage the cella was divided into two halves by an internal cross-wall, the western half dedicated to Artemis and the other half to the Empress Faustina, who was deified after her death. The fact that many Artemis temples in the Aegean region face west is testimony to Ekrem Akurgal's conclusion that all these temples were connected to each other by an earlier Anatolian religious cult. Ruins of a small building at the south-eastern corner of the temple belong to a 4th century AD church. According to some sources it is referred to as one of the Seven Churches of the Revelation. However, this cannot be correct as congregations not the actual buildings were meant by churches at that time. The king Croesus was the wealthiest man of his time and Sardis became the richest city of antiquity. The famous wise man of

Athens, also the reformer, Solon, came to see this great city and its famous king. It is thought that the famous story teller Aesop was a Phrygian who lived in Sardis during the reign of king Croesus. The empire fell to the hands of Persians in 546 B.C.E. Beside the temple a small Byzantine church and recently unearthed synagogue stood there.

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 1-6)” (KJV)

Philadelphia (Alasehir) was founded by Attalos II Philadelphos of Pergamum (159-138 B.C.E). In 481 B.C.E the Persian king Xerxes I had travelled towards Sardis on his way to Greece. The objective of Attalos II in founding a city here was probably to establish a gateway to Phrygia and to Hellenise its inhabitants who spoke their own Gallic tongue. The church which has been named after John was a rectangular building of six pillars of reused stone material and upper structure in brick. Three of pillars have survived, with the fourth half buried in soil. The westernmost pillars are under modern buildings. On the pillars some eleventh century paintings can barely be distinguished.

Philadelphia which is known as Alaşehir now, is about 130 Kms to the east of Smyrna (Izmir).

It was the least important cities of the ones mentioned in Revelation of John. The city was located on the eastern edge of the Ionian civilization. But it had the most difficult task of spreading the Christian faith to the east, outside the Ionian region. Philadelphia, together with Smyrna was considered as one of the distinguished churches out of the seven churches of Revelation about which nothing bad was mentioned by John.

Philadelphia means "brotherly love" and it was founded by the king of Pergamum, Attalus II, Philadelphus of Pergamum. He was given the title of

Philadelphus because of his love for his brother Eumenes, who was the previous king of Pergamum. The geographical position of the city was very important. It was on a high hill overlooking the Persian Royal Road and the two important valleys of Ionia, the Hermuz (Gediz) and the Meander (Menderes). By the year 19 A.D. native language Lydian had ceased and only the Greek language was spoken.

The city was in the middle of grape country. So, the most respected god was Dionysus. (he was the Greek wine god) The regional town center of Alasehir still continues the tradition of harvesting grapes.

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 7-13)” (KJV)

Laodicea on the Lycus (Eskihisar) is thought to have been founded by the Seleucid King Antiochus II Theos (261-246 BCE) and named after his wife Laodice. The name of the river Lycus (ÇürükSu) near which it was founded was attached to the name of the city to distinguish it from the other settlements of the same name. The Lycus was a tributary of the river Meander whose water has been a major source of the region's agricultural wealth. As usual the spot chosen for the new city was on the most important trade and military route from the Aegean coast to the interior of Anatolia.

The origin of the city goes back to the 3rd century B.C.E. It is thought to have been named to the honour of king Antiochus II 's wife Laodicea. Cicero is known to be lived in the city in 50 B.C.E. Laodicea was on the crossroads between the important Ionian cities of that time. This helped the city become wealthy because of high volume of commercial activity in the region.

There was a rich and influential Jewish community long before the Christian era. But, most of the locals worshipped Zeus more than any other god. During the time of John, the church of Laodicea was one of the seven most important churches of Christianity.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 14-22)” (KJV)

Analysis of the Seven Churches

**These seven letters we have examined follow a set pattern of writing.
There are Seven Key Elements in each letter . They are:**

1. The meaning of the name of the church being addressed.

Ephesus: The Desired One; full purposed

Smyrna: Myrrh; Offering of Sacrifice

Pergamos: Much Married; Adulterous

Thyatira: Sacrifice of Labour

Sardis: Remnant

Philadelphia: Brotherly Love

Laodicea: Justice to People; Judgement

Though these names are actual geographical names of the churches referred to, the characteristics of the churches are represented in the meanings themselves. They are also prophetic in terms of the dispensational approach.

2. The title of Jesus, the author of the letter, each chosen relevant to the message to that particular church.

General Title: I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

Ephesus: who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands

Smyrna: the First and the Last, who died and came back to life again.

Pergamos: who has the sharp double-edged sword

Thyatira: Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.

Sardis: who holds seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

Philadelphia: who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. One who opens the door which no one can shut

Laodicea: the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.

3. The commendation of the Church - Their strong points and merits.

- Ephesus:** deeds, hard work, perseverance, endured hardship, did not tolerate wicked men
Smyrna: through affliction and poverty did not leave faith
Pergamos: among the Satanists kept the faith and did not renounce faith
Thyatira: deeds, love and faith, service and perseverance
Sardis: deeds
Philadelphia: deeds, kept the word, did not deny my name
Laodicea: deeds

4. The reproof and rebuke of things they failed in.

- Ephesus:** forsaken their first love
Smyrna: xx
Pergamos: teaching of Balaam / Teaching of Nicolaitans
Thyatira: tolerates Jezebel
Sardis: dead
Philadelphia: xx
Laodicea: neither hot nor cold and is lukewarm

5. The exhortation and counsel specific to the condition of the particular church; relevant to the geography and history of the city.

- Ephesus:** remember your first love / repent and do the things you did first
Smyrna: be faithful to the point of death
Pergamos: repent, otherwise I will come and fight against them
Thyatira: hold on to what you have until I come
Sardis: Remember what you have received and heard; obey it and repent
Philadelphia: Hold on to what you have
Laodicea: Buy from me gold refined in fire so you can be rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your xx nakedness; and slave to put on your eyes so that you can see

6. The promise to the "overcomer".

- Ephesus:** I will give the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God.
Smyrna: Will not be hurt at all by the second death.
Pergamos: I will give some of the hidden manna, I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, xx known only to him who receives it.
Thyatira: I will give him the authority over the nations./ I will give him the morning star.
Sardis: They will walk with me, dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will xx acknowledge him before my Father and his angels.
Philadelphia: I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on him the xx name of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down from heaven from my God; I will also write to xx him my new name.
Laodicea: I will give the right to sit with me on my throne.

7. The concluding phrase, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Corresponding Dispensation Age and the Parable

- Ephesus:** Apostolic Period: sowing of the seeds till 100 AD
Smyrna: Persecution Period Parable of the Weeds
Pergamos: State Church Period Parable of Mustard Seed
Thyatira: Period of Heresy Parable of the Leaven
Sardis: Reformation Period Parable of the Hidden Treasure
Philadelphia: Missionary Period Parable of the Great Pearl
Laodicea: End time Apostate Church Period The Parable of the Drag Net

Summary Table of the Seven Churches

	Ephesus 2:1-7	Smyrna 2:8-11	Pergamum 2:12-17	Thyatira 2:18-29	Sardis 3:1-6	Philadelphia 3:7-13	Laodicea 3:14-22
Period described	The early church, AD 33 to 100 (67 Years)	The church under pagan persecution, 100 to 312 (212 Years)	Paganism enters the church, 312 to 590 (278 Years)	Papal supremacy, 590 to 1517 (927 Years)	Protestant reformation of Dark Ages, 590 to 1517 (233 Years)	Awakening, Bible spread and studied, 1517 to 1750 (175 Years)	The end-time church, content but sinful, to End. (69 to 1995)
Church age	Apostolic	Caesars	Constantine	Middle Age	Reformation	Missionary	Apostate
Name							
Opening	To the angel of the church . . . write						
Description of Christ	Holds 7 stars, First and Last, Died		The One walks among	Eyes of fire, Holds 7 feet like	Holy, true, spirits and 7 holds keys,		Amen, true witness,

	7 lampstands and came to life	edged sword brass; searches minds	stars	opens and shuts	Beginning of creation
<u>What Christ knows</u>	Works, labor patience	Works, trials, poverty; blasphemy of false Jews	Works, living where Satan's throne is	More love, service, faith, patience	Works, (and see "What you have")
<u>Commendation</u>	Tested false prophets, perseverance	Rich in spite of poverty	Held to My name & faith even in time of martyr	(above)	Have few names undefined
<u>Rebuke</u>	Left first love	x	Ones with doctrine of Balaam	Jezebel with immorality permitted	Kept command to persevere
<u>Counsel</u>	Remember, repent, do first works	Do not fear suffering	Repent	Hold fast till I come	x
<u>Warning</u>	Lampstand will be removed	x	Will fight with sword of mouth	Jezebel into sickbed, children killed	Watch, strengthen remainder
<u>What you have</u>	My hatred for Nicolaitans	Tribulation coming	Also have ones with Nicolaitans doctrine	Rest do not have false doctrine, not Satanic	I will come as thief if you do not watch
<u>Reward for overcomers</u>	Eat from tree of life	Not hurt by second death	Hidden manna, white stone	Power over nations; morning	A name as alive, but dead (and see above)
<u>Other promises</u>	x	Eternal life to ones faithful to death	x	Clothed in white, name in book, star	A little strength, My name
<u>Closing</u>	Listen to what the Spirit says to the churches				

A First Exercise on the Seven Churches

Characteristics of the churches help us identify the times they symbolise. Category assignments are somewhat arbitrary in some cases. With further study you can match the descriptions of Christ with those in Chapter 1. You may also look for links between churches such as the new names of Philadelphia following dead names in Sardis. One significant point from this very obvious pattern is that the Holy Spirit no doubt expects us to look for patterns in the rest of the book. As discussed in the running commentary, the seven churches in Asia Minor which John wrote to, are representative of periods in church history. Our identification of those periods is based on the text which was discussed in more detail than possible here.

The apostasy set in the apostolic days, and has been running and increasing in power ever since until this very day with liberalism and modernism in our churches, thinking to please the man in the street, getting them back in the churches, but this is of any help at all, instead it is Satan's target of destruction. It is the development of the Antichrist at this very end of time, according to the Holy Scriptures. The course of this apostasy, the growth of the tares (*liberalism, modernism, and movements like 'rent-a-priest or rent-a-pastor' and similar 'profit' religious organisations, the ordinances of the churches being totally commercialised*) among the wheat, is supposed to be indicated in these letters, which show a gradual decline from the fervour of the first love or the Ephesian period, to the lukewarm condition (*sped out of the mouth*) of the Laodicean period.

However, prior to pondering on this further, let us be very clear in the first place, that these churches were, in John's time, seven historical existences in Asia. Nonetheless, in the second place, they are doubtless to be regarded as representative churches. Representative of what?

- (1) Representative of the Constitutional Church of Christ at that time. Doubtless the church of the apostolic days in every place contained within it the various elements of decline, summed up in these seven letters.
- (2) Representative of the different characteristics of the Constitutional Church always more or less existent in every period of history. In other words, not only in the apostolic age, but in every age succeeding, the praise on the one hand, and the censures on the other contained in these seven letters have been applicable to the Constitutional Church of Christ at all times and generations.
- (3) Representative of the dominant characteristics of the Constitutional Church of Christ in seven different periods of her history. And that is, in the earlier period of the Constitutional Church her dominant characteristic is brought forth in the letter to the assembly (church) at Ephesus.

The next period in the history of the Constitutional Church of Christ after Ephesus is Smyrna, see as follows:



Church at Ephesus

The letter to the church at Ephesus represents the spiritual condition of this local church in the first period of her history, or in other words, from the ascension of Christ to the close of the first century, the apostolic era.

“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Ephesus 2: 1-7)” (KJV)

Observe that this message to the Ephesians is directly from Jesus Christ who walks among the seven churches and is the head and the cornerstone of the Constitutional Church. Those who have the attitudes and behaviours of a devoted Ephesian persevere, work hard, and try to keep false teachers out of the

assembly. However, the Ephesians have a major problem that needs to be rectified.

Although the Ephesians do not tolerate wickedness, are solidly against evil, and hate idolatry, they lose their first love, **which is the love of the Father, his Son, his truth, and their fellow man**. They become rigid to the point of self-righteousness and impose their own standards over God's righteous standards. They forget their awesome calling and the importance of the Father's royal law of love.

The Ephesians seem to forget that a major part of their calling and mission is to grow in grace, knowledge, and love for the things of God. They lose their intense love and zeal for God and have fallen into indifference at the final call to battle. Jesus warns them to rekindle their love and zeal for God and his ways or he will remove their candlestick. This is an extremely serious warning. Because the candlestick symbolises the entire Ephesian assembly, Jesus is saying that he will remove them from among his followers. And because the candlestick also represents spiritual truth, he will also remove the truth of God from their hearts and minds; thereby, he will take away their eternal reward and position in the Paradise of God.

Today, Jesus Christ is saying that, if you do not repent and have a change of attitude toward your calling and return back to your first love, he will remove the spiritual light from your life. Without spiritual light a person dies spiritually and will be thrown out the Paradise of God. Therefore, anyone who has accepted the Father's call to salvation had better take their calling very seriously.

Although the Ephesians do many positive things (Revelation 2:6), they do not maintain their first love. Good works do not lead to salvation, only yielding faith in Jesus Christ does. As far as Jesus is concerned, they are not fit for God's Paradise. Ephesians who let their love die as a result of becoming rigid in their belief system and their own way of doing things must repent or they will die spiritually and eternally.

Those who overcome the trials and tests of this life, remain in a repentant attitude, and maintain their love and zeal for the Father through Jesus Christ, will have eternal life and immortality as portrayed in the eating from the Tree of Life.

Church at Smyrna

The letter to the church at Smyrna represents the second period, or the martyr church, so-called, from the death of the last apostle, John, to the rise of Constantine, 100-311 A.D.

“And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2: 8-11)” (KJV)

Here again, we see the positive aspects of the believers as they try to do things right. Yet some will suffer imprisonment and even martyrdom to test their faithfulness. This is an assembly of believers that will face severe trials and persecution in the time just before Christ's return.

The English word tribulation is from the Greek '*thilipsis*', which means crushing beneath a weight. The word poverty is from the Greek '*ptocheria*', which means real destitution. Those of Smyrna are under much personal pressure and have virtually no material goods.

One reason for this poverty is the natural order of things, which can be seen in economically disadvantaged countries and the lower economic class of society as a whole. In the early church, the believers were impoverished as a result of persecution that caused them to flee to other areas. Sometimes their goods were stolen while they were being beaten in their own homes for their beliefs. The prophecies indicate that these conditions will also exist during the time just before Christ returns.

Some of Christian Smyrna will suffer imprisonment for ten days (i.e., **a limited length of time**) during a time of intense persecution that will come to an end. However, in the ancient world, imprisonment was just a prelude to being executed. Thus, many of this assembly of believers may end up being persecuted and some will be imprisoned before being executed.

Christ is telling the believers of Smyrna that he demands in the Father's name absolute loyalty even facing death. Christ warns those of Smyrna not to give up but to remain steadfast in the faith and become overcomers through their persecution, imprisonment, and physical death in order to obtain the crown of life which is eternal.

In addition, Smyrna is filled with internal strife and persecution caused by those who are not truly converted, acting as ‘if’, but in fact are roaring lions waiting to devour. Instead of removing the cause of their trouble or removing themselves from the problem in accordance to scriptural instructions, many of those of Smyrna will suffer persecution from within and outside of the church.

Church at Pergamos

The third letter, Pergamos, from the State church under Constantine to the rise of the papacy (Pope Gregory 1), 311 – 590.

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. (Revelation 2: 12 – 17)” (KJV)

Historically, Pergamos was the administrative centre of Asia, which meant that in the first century it was a centre of Caesar worship for the whole province. This is why it is referred to as Satan's seat. Pergamos was a city where people were required to worship Caesar or die. Also referred to as Pergamos is an assembly of God's people who live right in the centre of Satan's religious system.

The believers of Pergamos are praised for not being afraid to be called Christians and for holding to the faith, even after one of their brethren was martyred for being faithful. However, to be noticed in verses 14-16 what Christ has against some of them:

“But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the

Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. (Revelation 2: 14 – 16)” (KJV)

Some held the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating things sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. See Revelation 2: 14 – 16 above.

What is said about some of the believers of Pergamos can also be said about some of the believers today. Today's society is extremely promiscuous with many sexual perversions being accepted and practised. Some of the children of God and believers in Jesus Christ, including their spiritual leaders, suffer from the same attitudes and behaviours found in ancient Pergamos. Because of this, Christ says that he will fight against those of Pergamos who do such abominable things. This is an extremely serious warning; *Jesus Christ does not play games with a person's salvation*. Therefore, any to whom this warning applies should take it very seriously and act appropriately.

Those of ancient Pergamos lived in an environment where Satan's influence, through false religions as modernism and liberalism today, was exceptionally strong and some of the believers had compromised God's standards in order to avoid problems with the society around them. Rather than having an attitude of coming out of this society and being separate as God requires of his faithful children, they became a part of the evil society around them.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. (2 Corinthians 6:17)” (KJV)

Christ warns that any believer who has an attitude of compromise concerning the truth of God during the time just prior to his return will find themselves at war with him. Remember that the word of God cuts as a two edged sword and causes division between those who truly believe and those who do not. Therefore, we can assume that division over what is right and wrong will cause great turmoil among those with the attitude of Pergamos. They will be persecuted by the world and warned by Jesus Christ of his intent to kill those of his church who refuse to behave righteously and avoid partaking of the evils of this society. (Revelation 2: 17 see above)

Church at Thyatira

The fourth letter, Thyatira, from the rise of the papacy to the Reformation, 590 – 1517.

“And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 2: 18 – 29) (KJV)

Once again, Jesus offers much praise for the good done by this assembly of believers and therefore elected; however, there is a very serious problem that needs to be corrected if they are to be successful in gaining eternal and immortal life.

The problems within Thyatira did not come from outside the church; *they came from within*. They began with Thyatira's acceptance of the teachings of a woman who was thought to be a prophetess from God, but who in actuality was an evil person, as was king Ahab's wife Jezebel. This woman urged them to compromise in order to comply with the world's standards and thereby gain the acceptance of unbelievers, advantage in business, and prosperity in other areas of life.

This false prophetess was not necessarily trying to destroy the church; she just wanted the believers to view the truth of God in a more liberal way than Jesus Christ and the apostles had taught. However, her teachings led to compromise, especially in relation to idolatry, which led to spiritual fornication.

Today, there is a majority Sabbath-keeping people that follow the foolish and dangerous teachings of a prophet or prophetess that come from within an honourable society; or, from a devoted Christian community. Although these

people carry on a dynamic, outgoing, and powerful ministry to the world around them, they are in deep trouble with Jesus Christ.

On the surface this religious community looks very productive by having good people with good works. Yet, they have compromised the truth of God. They are self-seeking and deceived because they have been following the false teaching of a false prophetess for many generations. Therefore, this is a serious warning to them from Jesus that their salvation is in jeopardy.

Many of Thyatira will receive the trial of fire because of their lack of zeal for the truth of God. Jesus will put them through great persecution and even martyrdom in an attempt to awaken them to their sinful condition and give them a final opportunity to repent. Jesus warns that he will punish the unrepentant in order to purge and purify his Father's children.

Some of God's people have deliberately sought to do evil. But why? The teachings of the ancient Jezebel seemed to encourage sin, because one could repent and accept God's graciousness and make God look good. Many today have actually built this case by corrupting the scriptures and thereby turning God's grace into a license to sin.

Though these people show service, faith, love, and perseverance, it is apparent that they desire to be entertained rather than instructed, to be soothed rather than corrected, and to be more of a social club than an educated assembly. If you went into this assembly, on the surface you would think this is a dynamic Christian community with great works, yet they do not really want to be educated in the truth of God nor follow his spiritual ways.

At the centre of Thyatira's problems is the acceptance of the teachings of a false prophetess and, perhaps, in some cases, a false prophet. Many of these people appear to be righteous but they will not easily give up their false teachings. This assembly has a problem of worshiping idols, which is sinning against the one and true God. Moreover, they worship a person and their false teachings, which is idolatry and compromising the truth of God. To those of Thyatira who are carefully and zealously following the teachings of God, Christ says:

“But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 2: 25 – 29)”
(KJV)

Church at Sardis

The fifth letter, Sardis, the Protestant Churches from the Reformation to the rise of Methodism, 1517-1755.

“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 1 – 6)” (KJV)

Within the Sardis assembly of believers, there are only a few who have not defiled themselves spiritually. The implication is that unless there is a major change in their attitude and behaviour, most that have the attitude of the Sardis church will end up in eternal separation from seeing God in paradise.

The first time a person makes a serious mistake after his or her conversion, he or she may recognise this as a sin due to a weakness in his or her life. If a person deals with it at the time and resolves to change, the problem will be overcome. However, if one compromises again and again, each subsequent compromise becomes easier and easier until self-delusion sets in and sin becomes an acceptable way of conducting oneself before God the Father and Jesus Christ. A person with the Sardis attitude does not truly believe that the wages of sin brings eternal death.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6: 23)” (KJV)

The assembly portrayed as Sardis do not appear to be troubled by heresy, because they do not have anyone among them who is thinking enough to come up with a heresy. They are so spiritually dead and so lazy that they just accept whatever doctrines seem pleasant and easy to comply with. They are just drifting along in ignorance to their plight and the serious danger that confronts them. This church is not likely to be troubled by an attack by Satan or any other

outside source, because the truth is that they are so spiritually dead already that they are not worth attacking.

The warning to those of Sardis is that they had better quickly wake up to their deadly weariness and watch out, because their salvation is in danger. Christ also warns that within the assembly of Sardis there are only a few who truly love the Father and his Son and are following the ways of God. Jesus encourages these few to continue to be watchful and they will receive their reward. However, most of their brothers and sisters in Christ who appear outwardly to be spiritually alive but are spiritually dead, will die the second death and be eternally separated from God, if they do not repent of their evil ways. Vigilance is really part of the price of liberty under Christ.

Christ is telling the believers in danger of Sardis to think back to when they first heard the truth of God and the Father's good news about his Son and salvation and to remember the time of their spiritual awakening and their repentance and conversion to a son of God.

Most of Sardis are in great danger. They have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as their own and have known the Father; therefore, they are having their opportunity for salvation. Nevertheless, because of their sins, they are on the pathway that leads to eternal death. That is why this warning is so severe. They have little or no will to prayerfully study God's Word or to use it on a continuing basis to help them overcome their spiritual failings. They are so self-deceived that they do not even realise that the little truth they have is slipping away and that they are in danger of losing their salvation.

Christ says in order to be among the overcomers whom he will accept, any with the Sardis attitude must awaken from the deadly danger and show some signs of repentance and change.

Those of Sardis are not fulfilling their responsibilities to grow in grace and knowledge nor are they fulfilling their commission properly. Most in Sardis are complacent and are not trying to live a righteous life. They have allowed the truth of God to slip away, and Jesus considers them spiritually dead.

Because they have stopped trying to overcome, Jesus sees no benefit in pursuing their salvation any further and will allow them to die if they do not make an effort to repent and live righteously.

Make no mistake, only the overcomer will keep their name from being blotted out of the book of life. Jesus says that any with the attitude of Sardis are on the verge of losing their eternal life because of a compromising, complacent, and lazy attitude toward the things of God and their calling. What a terrible

accusation from our Lord and Saviour. Those of Sardis have a reputation for being alive; however, they are in fact already spiritually dead.

Few from Sardis will pass the test of persecution, because they are lazy and uninspired by the awesome opportunity that they have been given to be among the first of humanity to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as immortal sons of God the Father. The believers of Sardis still have hope of obtaining salvation, if they will only repent and endure to the end with a righteous attitude.

Church at Philadelphia

The sixth letter, Philadelphia, the missionary period, 1755, to somewhere near the present time.

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 7 – 13)” (KJV)

Only one of the seven assemblies of God's children is used by Jesus to carry out the final dynamic preaching of the gospel. Although other believers may be given awesome gifts from God to work great miracles and perform a great witness, those of Philadelphia seem to be the only ones who are empowered with the gifts shown in 1Corinthians 12:4-11, and Romans 12:6-8, in order to reach out to the world as a whole, both within the body of the believers and through world-wide evangelism:

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are

diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 11)” (KJV)

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. (Romans 12: 6-8)”

See the emphasis upon having kept Christ's Word and not denying Christ's Name. In the Greek language, the verbs are in the aorist tense, which describes a definite, specific act in the past. The implication is that there has been some particular spiritual trial out of which those of Philadelphia have emerged victorious. It is for this reason that God uses and empowers them to perform a great work for him in the end of the age.

Part of the reward for having the Philadelphia attitude and behaviour is to be given an extremely prominent position in the Kingdom of God: a position worthy of great respect and honour as found in Revelation 3: 9-11.

Only those with the Philadelphia attitude and behaviour are given a significant measure of protection by God. This does not mean that they are totally free from persecution or even martyrdom, but of all God's children, they are the only ones who have major protection promised to them in order for them to proclaim the Good News of the coming Kingdom of God, whereas the rest of God's children will be severely reproached by Jesus Christ through the Word of God and the persecution by Satan and the world at large in order to try, purify, perfect, and save them from eternal death.

Those of Philadelphia may only have a little strength, their resources and numbers may be small, but they are faithful to God and his plan for the salvation of humanity. See, Jesus also said that they have kept his commandments; therefore, he will keep them. They are keeping God's Word, the Word of endurance. Those of Philadelphia try hard to practise the kind of endurance that

Jesus Christ displayed. They are people who do not compromise; they endure and firmly keep in mind the goal that God has for them and humanity.

An Admonition

Those of the Philadelphia attitude and behaviour are the only ones who have a completely positive description. They are faithfully keeping the Word of God, they are not denying Jesus' Name, and they are enduring patiently with persistence. Because of this, they are promised special protection against Satan in order to do a mighty work for God, yet there is a serious warning within the message to them.

Jesus Christ admonishes them to hold on to what they have, so that no one takes their crown. This is not an issue of theft; it is an issue of becoming unworthy to wear the crown. Jesus gives responsibilities, opportunities, and physical and spiritual gifts to each of the believers in Jesus Christ. If a person performs his or her responsibility, seizes the opportunity, and properly uses the gifts he or she has been given, will be rewarded accordingly; they have a crown reserved for them to wear in the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, if they prove themselves unfit, Jesus will give their task to someone else and they will lose their reward and perhaps their eternal life.

Grab the Moment

It is very clear that God wants all the believers to serve him in various ways. The point is that God watches for individuals and even assemblies of individuals who will take hold of a particular opportunity to serve him. If they act, God uses them in that responsibility. God the Father and Jesus look at each of those who have been called to salvation as individuals and, if they as individuals will seize the moment and take action, God will use them in his great and awesome plan for the salvation of humanity.

From what is written about the church of Philadelphia, it seems that this assembly is in the forefront of proclaiming the gospel message. Because the believers have a correct attitude toward God and are actively performing the task that they have been given, they receive no correction from Christ. In fact, they are spared from the hour of trial that comes upon the whole earth and will receive an incredibly awesome reward for their diligence.

Church at Laodicea

The seventh letter, Laodicea, from the present time to the second coming of Christ.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 14 – 22)” (KJV)

Of all the seven assemblies of God's people and believers in Jesus Christ directly spoken to by the Lord, this group is the most pointedly condemned. They are neither faithful nor unbelieving; rather, they are completely indifferent. Their indifference to God's truth is sickening to Jesus. The Laodiceans are so self-satisfied that they think everything is fine and that they are doing great works. They view themselves as the recipients of great spiritual understanding, but they have practically none.

Here, we see a people who are so indifferent and lazy because of their perceived knowledge and spirituality that they are in danger of being cast away from God. They are self-deceived into thinking that they are spiritually rich; however, they are not. Christ is giving them their last opportunity to repent and become zealous for God. If these people will hear and heed what he is saying, he will again establish fellowship with them. If not, they will be cast away with the unrepentant wicked.

Christ is searching for people that want Him and his Father to be the whole of their life. He says he is at the door knocking, hoping the wayward elect will let him back into their hearts and minds. However, he will not force his way into

their lives. These individuals have to make a decision to repent of their nauseating quality of being spiritually lukewarm, self-satisfied, complacent, and in need of nothing.

Their indifference has left them self-deluded and they do not realise they are spiritually poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked. Those who lead such a people and do not themselves repent are in deep trouble. Those individuals have an attitude of having it made, but have no real commitment for spiritual growth. They feel secure as long as they associate with a particular group (i.e., success by association). That kind of attitude leads to indifference and complacency, which Christ severely rebukes. He will bring fiery trials in order to bring those with such an attitude to genuine repentance:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3: 19-20)” (KJV)

The Greek word '*elegchein*', which is used in connection with the rebuke of those with the Laodicean attitude, means a severe rebuke that compels a person to see the error of their ways. Christ is showing, in an extremely strong way, that some of the believers who are in this decadent condition can expect extremely severe trials that come directly from him.

Because of their self-righteous attitudes, Jesus says they will be tried in fire. A Laodicean needs a major attitude adjustment in order for him to be used by God, and allowed to enter God's Paradise. This is why Jesus has to deal so severely with them. God the Father and his son are extremely merciful. If a Laodicean repents, he will be forgiven and welcomed into the Eternal Kingdom of God:

‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. (Revelation 3: 21 – 22)” (KJV)

Important Remark:

Little space is left to speak of the structure of the letters themselves, but it will be seen from the following that there are certain forms fundamental to them all, as:

1. An order to write
2. A magnificent title of the speaker

3. An address to the church
4. A command to hear
5. A promise to the faithful

Further, quite interesting to note, that the title of the speaker, Christ, has in every instance two main features, first, it is taken for the most from the imagery of the preceding vision; and, secondly, it always seems to harmonise with the state of condition of the church or assembly addressed.

Part 3 – Apocalyptic – Pre-millennial, Chapters 4 – 18

1. **Chapters four and five.** In these chapters we have somehow an introductory vision of those that follow, which seems to set before us a picture of the glory of the risen saints in heaven and the going forth of the Lamb (who is at the same time the Lion of the tribe of Judah), in those judgments upon the living Gentile nations of which the prophets have informed us, and which we are prepared to learn will fall on the earth after the Constitutional Church of Christ has been caught to meet her Lord in the air. Let us now go into detail:

In these chapters we also see the “first fruit sheaf” accepted before the Lord, and the outpouring of Pentecost.

Christ is declared "WORTHY" and is inaugurated into his royal priesthood.

A magnificent picture of the sanctuary in heaven emerges in these chapters.

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4: 1)” (KJV)

There are also golden bowls full of incense. A door in heaven is open. What door is this?

The word "door" "thura," in Revelation 4:1 appears many times in the Septuagint in direct reference to the door into the sanctuary. Leviticus 3:1 tells us the sacrifice is killed at the "thura" of the tabernacle.

“And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be a male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. (Leviticus 3: 1)” (KJV)

And here in heaven we see the Lamb that has already been slain! The sacrifice was offered, and now the door into the heavenly sanctuary is open. The work of applying the atonement is to begin.

Just previous to this, John saw there was great consternation in heaven as to whether the work could move forward, as the One to perform it must be "worthy". It is then that we see Christ, as the Lamb slain, He is declared as worthy. Why is He worthy? Because of His sacrifice on the cross, the work of the sanctuary can begin.

In Leviticus we read:

"And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. (Leviticus 23: 11)"
(KJV)

The single sheaf, presented to the Lord here, during the Jewish feasts, speaks of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the sheaf of first fruits

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)"
(KJV)

Christ fulfilled the reality of this feast as He ascended to the heavenly Holy Places and presented Himself as the sheaf of the first fruits. And there, in the heavenly scene portrayed in Revelation 4 and 5 He is declared WORTHY and His sacrifice is accepted ; to redeem out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation those who follow Him.

Jesus is the representative sheaf and the saints down through the ages will be the harvest at the end of the age, gathered into the heavenly kingdom.

The Jewish Feasts offer a key to the understanding of the Book of Revelation, as it is a transcript of God's Covenant in the Last Days of the Universal and Constitutional Church of true believers in Jesus Christ, and response to that Covenant.

The Old Testament tells us about an everlasting Covenant; it also tells us about God's covenant with Israel. However, what is the new covenant, and how does it fit in with the everlasting covenant? The Book of Revelation shows the new

covenant in the setting of the EVERLASTING COVENANT and the SANCTUARY.

When we study the sanctuary truths revealed in both the Old and the New Testaments we see that Christ's ministry of salvation involves more than the sacrifice, His death. Indeed, Christ's sacrifice is all sufficient and complete. Yet, now He, for the reason of that sacrifice He is declared worthy to begin the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

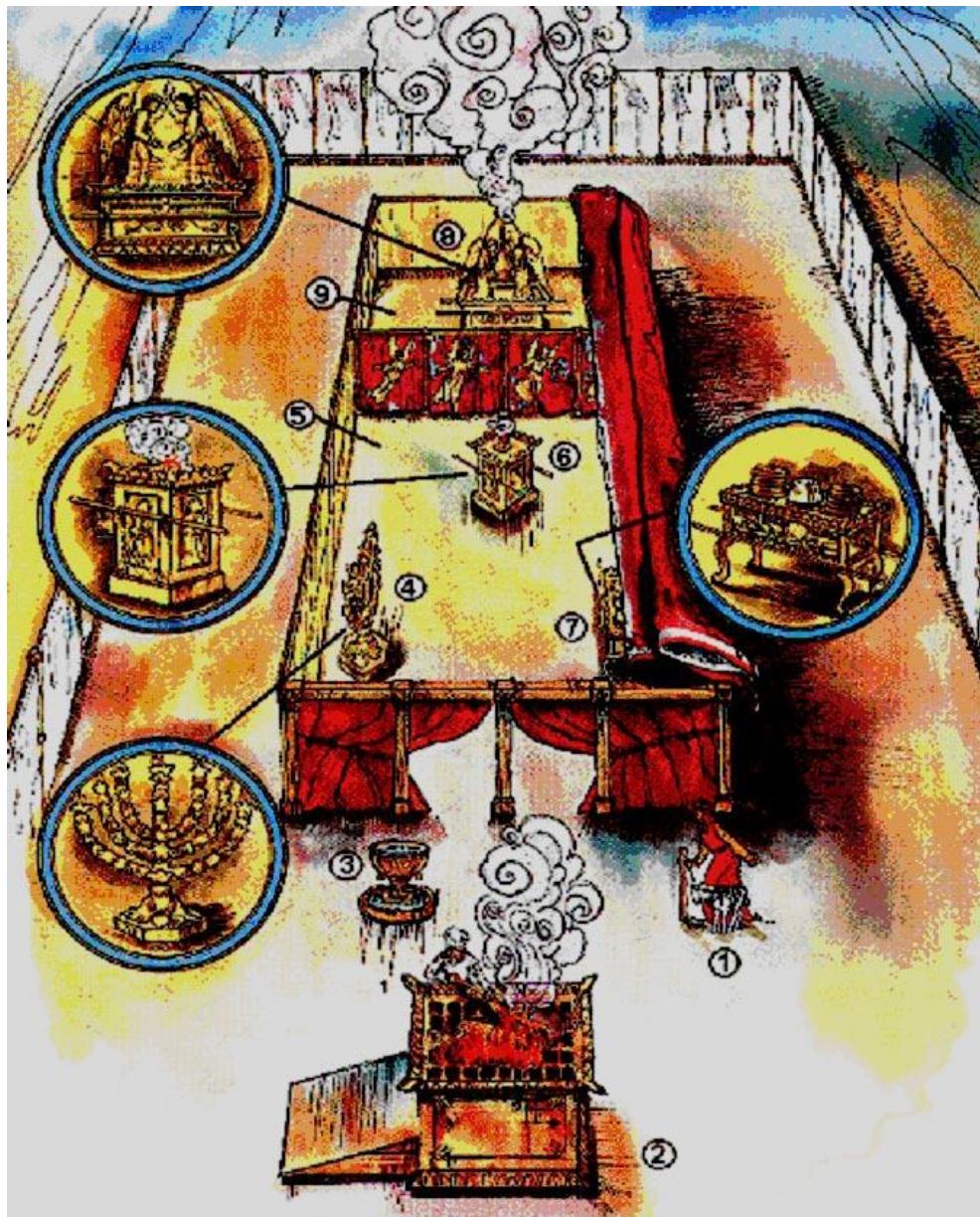
The earth is represented by the "outer court" of the sanctuary, the place where the altar of sacrifice stood. When Christ prayed:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. (John 17: 4)" (KJV)

It was His earthly work that was completed, that is, the work He came to do in the "outer court" of salvation's sanctuary - BUT THIS IS NOT HIS ONLY WORK!

The Sanctuary is in Three Main Parts

1. The outer court where the sacrifice is slain.
2. The holy place where the priest ministers daily.
3. The Most Holy Place, where the Priest ministers on the Day of Atonement.



The Sanctuary's Description in the light of Christ:

Outer Court – This Earth

1. **The Lamb** Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God

2. The altar of Sacrifice where the Lamb was slain -
Christ died on Calvary's Cross

3. The laver of Cleansing--Christ was baptised as an example for us.

THE HOLY PLACE (5)--In Heaven

4. The golden Candle stand, with seven lamps -
Revelation 4:5 - Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne . (KJV)

6. The golden Altar of Incense Revelation 5: 8 – Golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

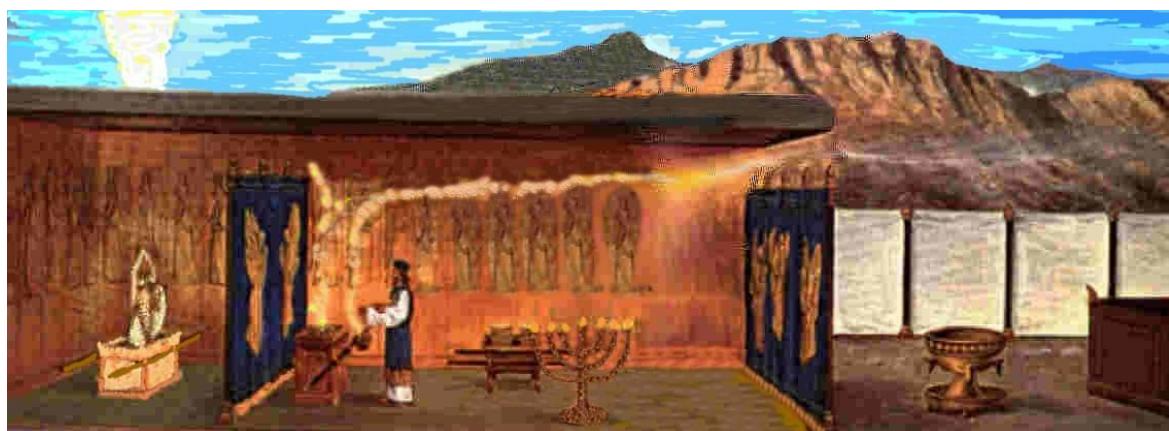
Revelation 8:3b - Offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. (KJV)

7. The table of Show Bread The Word of God

Revelation 4:5a - And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices. (KJV)

THE MOST HOLY PLACE (9)--In Heaven

8. The Ark of the Covenant The place of judgment and final cleansing.
Contains the MERCY SEAT and the TEN COMMANDMENTS.



The Sanctuary seen from a different angle.



The work of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth was represented by the activities done in the courtyard of the sanctuary. The sacrifice was perfect and complete,

yet even as the atonement in the wilderness sanctuary was then carried on inside the sanctuary, so Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary to apply the atonement for each responsive individual.

Christ's life, death, and resurrection did not end His work of reconciliation; on the contrary, they laid the foundation for His heavenly priesthood. It was by His death, that His work in the heavenly sanctuary could begin. This is the focus of the Book of Revelation as well as the letter to the Hebrews!

Hebrews focuses our eyes on the fact that we have a better priest, who presents the better blood, in a better sanctuary which is in heaven. In this heavenly sanctuary not made with human hands, Christ does what the services in the earthly sanctuary could only point to, as He only can forgive sins.

The Book of Revelation is the revelation of Christ in all the phases of Ministry in that heavenly sanctuary. It reveals Christ accomplishing the reality of what the earthly services could only shadow forth. It takes us through the realities that the "festivals" and "services" pointed to.

It pictures Christ, not only as the Great High Priest working, first in the Holy Place, then moving into the Most Holy Place, but it also deals with the covenant relationship of Christ with His people. It shows how He deals with the sin problem, and assures a glorious destiny for those who are faithful and loyal in yielding faith to Christ.

Revelation also demonstrates to the whole universe the true nature of sin. Sin reveals the evil character of Satan, the scapegoat, who set himself against God's law and seeks to obtain the homage of mankind to himself, and to break mankind's covenant relationship with God. In direct contrast Christ reveals the true covenant and the nature of goodness, and heaven's law, which is the character of God Himself.

This is the dual purpose of the sanctuary and the judgement. To reconcile God's people to Himself and to expose sin for what it really is. And through it all to show for all eternity the righteousness and justice of God.

The "Jewish feasts" are a key to understand Revelation and the revealed work of the resurrected Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. They were the shadow or types of the realities in the plan of salvation. They greatly aid our understanding of the books of Revelation (NT) and Daniel (OT).

Chapter Six

2. **Chapter six.** In this chapter we see this work of judgment actually going on upon earth after the Constitutional Church of Christ, doubtless, has been caught up. In the first seal, Christ himself may be the rider on the white horse, a figure symbolising his triumphant and glorious advent. It is, a kind of “preface of blessing” for that which follows in the case of the other seals, which represent the afflictions on the Roman world-war, famine, pestilence, and so on and forth, preceding it.

In other words, after the Constitutional Church of true believers in the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and before He actually comes to reign on the earth with His people, these purifying judgments must fall. However, the revelation of His coming precedes that of the judgments, and is described as “the preface of blessing.”

The order of narration is not historical but moral, and that which occurs last is usually narrated first.

What some may ask what about the fifth and the sixth seals? The second, third and fourth seal represent the judgments just spoken of, but the fifth it is thought, represents the faithful souls on the earth amid the prevailing error at that time. It is quite conceivable, and almost necessary to believe, that after the Constitutional Church of Christ has been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and before the destructive judgments and the nations shall culminate, there will be some here who will have turned to the Lord and be serving Him. We can understand how the very translation of the church itself is likely, by God’s grace, to produce that effect, and these are the ones who, as the great tribulation is settling down on the earth, are heard to cry out, “How long, O Lord, how long?”

The sixth seal is the representation of the culminating judgments, which are literal signs in Heaven’s abode and earth just before and confronting the end, just before the fulfilment of the first seal, and matching with the events forecast by Christ in the flesh, as recorded in Matthew chapters 24 and 25.

What about the scrolls ?

The Scroll

Revelation chapter 5 describes the enthronement and inauguration into the Royal Priesthood of Christ , "the slain Lamb" "the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David."

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (Revelation 5: 1 - !)" (KJV)

Compare this to Deut. 17:18. When a new king was enthroned, he was given a scroll containing his duties to God and to the people.

"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. (Deuteronomy 17: 18)" (KJV)

Look in 2 Kings 11:12 and 2 Chronicles 23:11 and you will see that:

"And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king. (2 Kings 11: 12)" (KJV)

"Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king. (2 Chronicles 23: 11)" (KJV)

History shows that the custom of the ancient near east was for kings to receive a "scroll" or book "to study and read it constantly and adhere diligently to all its instructions".

At the inauguration of the king... David, by solemn rite, was consecrated to his office as God's vicegerent. The scepter was placed in his hands. The covenant of his righteous sovereignty was written, and the people gave their pledges of loyalty. The diadem was placed upon his brow, and the coronation ceremony was over. Israel had a king by divine appointment.

Now what we see in Revelation 4-5 is Christ, the Son of God declared worthy to receive honour and power and glory. Because he has overcome, and now he is set down with his Father on his (Father's) throne as his coregent.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3: 21)" (KJV)

The sealed scroll has the same meaning and significance as the Covenant Book in the enthronement ceremony of Israelite Kings. It deals with the law and prophetic messages and covenantal stipulations. Jesus, as the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, is seen here as the end-time ruler who, on the basis of the saving work of His death, and priestly ministry, now deals with His church.

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. (Hebrews 8: 1 – 2)" (KJV)

Here is revealed the sanctuary of the new covenant.

"And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. (Zechariah 6: 12-13)" (KJV)

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7: 25)" (KJV)

Epilogue to the Scrolls

Christ's ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven's communication that the Redeemer's inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.

What about the seals?

The Seals

Revelation begins with Christ walking among the candlesticks (His churches as part of the universal Constitutional Church) pouring out His Holy Spirit (the seven lamps and the seven spirits) upon His church and establishing the covenant with them.

The early chapters in Revelation show CHRIST'S beginning work after His ascension and carries us through the Christian era. Here is where the NEW COVENANT is established.

Here is where the wonderful provisions of "Christ's blood" and the "Holy Spirit's power", are offered to the church and its believers.

Revelation chapters 4 and 5 is a joyous occasion praising God for the wonderful covenant He has made with the people of men, and honouring Christ for the sacrifice He was willing to suffer, in order that the covenant could be ratified and executed.

When the sixth seal is opened two parties are brought to view. Each of the two is portrayed in the final events of earth's history. As Christ appears and the heavens recede like a scroll and every mountain and island is removed, those who have been deceived will flee from the face of Him who sits on the throne. What deception has deceived them? The deception that is now taught in many Christian circles that people do not have to repent and forsake their sins so that those sins may be blotted out, and that good works are enough to enter the Kingdom of God, and be on the save side. The great deceiver today is

modernism and liberalism far from the true Word of God. To them the coming of the Lord is a consuming fire and they cannot face it.

The other group is portrayed standing before God's throne with palm branches, worshiping God Who wipes away every tear from their eyes.

As it is shown that so many people will be rushing for the mountains begging them to fall upon them to hide them from the wrath of the God, we hear the question being asked: "WHO WILL BE ABLE TO STAND?"

It is chapter 7 we will presently see, deals with the answer. The answer is:

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7: 14)" (KJV)

It is only through the blood of Christ that any of us can stand in that judgment. For it is only in Christ's righteousness that we can be accounted as worthy of heaven. In other words-- without the covenant, none will stand-- no not one --

Now the importance of the covenant relationship understanding is crucial however. For the sixth seal still reveals a lot of people who are not covered.

For indeed none will be in the victorious crowd in the last days who is not in a firm covenant relationship with Christ. NONE.

Only those whose sins are covered by the slain Lamb of God, and are in that covenant relationship with Christ will be able to stand.

So, Revelation's first picture of the heavenly sanctuary portrays Christ's work in the holy place. The sanctuary is now open. Previous to this no sanctuary work could be done as there was no blood-- and without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins-- the blood of bulls and sheep could not possibly do it!

The major religious teachings do not understand the covenant relationship. They see the new covenant as radically different from God's dealings with the children of Israel under the Old Testament or Covenant.

Now there is a difference between the new and the old, because the old covenant was based on human priests, animal sacrifices and blood, and an earthly sanctuary. But contrary to modern understanding the former was not an end in itself. (i.e. they were saved by works, we by grace) NO! The old was a type or a series of symbols of what was to come. The old portrays in symbols how God works out His covenant.

Therefore in the new covenant we have the real high Priest, the real and better cleansing blood, the heavenly sanctuary. Here the real work of dealing with sin takes place for it is only through the Blood of Christ that sin can be forgiven. Yet, the stipulations-- that we walk in the commandments and statutes of moral uprightness with our Lord and Saviour were not done away with-- they are still part of the covenant.

The curses and blessings of the old covenant were not done away with. Revelation reveals that they are still part of the new covenant. Sin that is unconfessed and unforsaken is not covered by that precious atoning blood of Christ and will stand against us in the investigative judgment.

Chapters 7- 9

3. **Chapters 7 – 9.** In this section, referring to the law of recurrence, we have fuller detail of the divine judgments which precede the millennium. The “preface of blessing” is given in chapter 7, where we have set before us “the two elect bodies preserved for blessing at that time.” The first is the faithful remnant of Israel which shall be preserved through the tribulation.

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. (Revelation 7: 1-8)”
(KJV)

The second is the Constitutional Church of Christ caught up to meet the Lord in the air:

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7: 9-17)” (KJV)

Now follow, in the Book of Revelation the six trumpets, the judgments already outlined in the vision of the seals. It would appear that the judgments under the figure of the trumpets, are confined to the people and the land of Israel, and it will be seen that they are destructions partly resulting from the exercise of the powers of nature and partly from superhuman agencies.

Detailed comments on chapter 7

It is not unintentional that the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation reads as an interval between the opening of the six seals in chapter 6, and the opening of the seventh seal in Chapter 8. We would normally expect that as the preceding chapter deals in the opening of the six seals, that this chapter would reveal to us the contents of the seventh seal. However, this chapter reads as a "pause" between the six seals, and the opening of the seventh. Chapter 6 ends with God asking, "*For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*" And this Revelation chapter 7 answers that question as it portrays those who are sealed by God and so made "secure" and safe from God's judgments. The number seven being the number of completeness or totality, this interval between the sixth and seventh seal illustrates what must occur before the completion in the events of that seventh seal, which are the judgments of God poured out upon the earth, that the third part of trees, and all green grass are burnt up. It is self evident that God is using this seventh chapter to illustrate to

us that before the judgments (chapter 8) of the seventh seal is poured out, all Israel who are to be sealed, must first be sealed. That is the nature of this chapter, and of the gospel, and indeed the very command that the messenger ascending from the east gives herein. It is declaring that all the servants of God must first be sealed in their foreheads, and it is only after this, that this judgment that the earth and trees be hurt, can take place.

Reading over this chapter superficially it might appear that a literal understanding of the physical nation of Israel is warranted, and that only 144,000 Jewish people are sealed or saved. However, when studied carefully, we find such an understanding is untenable. Considering not only the facts of the immediate context, but also as these things are studied in the light of related passages, this cannot be speaking of national Israel. Indeed, if we are to take this Israel as the literal nation, or of only physical Jews, then we must of necessity also take the number sealed as "literally" only 144,000 that will be secured or saved. But even the most loyal advocates of a totally literal exegesis will generally not accept such a conclusion. i.e., they once again violate their own rules when it contradicts their theories, and will find ways to get around them.

Moreover, there are peculiarities with this list of tribes which also serve to illustrate that they are not to be taken literally. We are informed that they are sealed from "all" the tribes of Israel, but two of the literal tribes (Dan and Ephraim) are missing. This naturally brings up the question, "*..what all Israel?*" The consistent and round number of exactly 12,000 people from each of the tribes, is another clue that we should not take this literally. If there are literally only 12,000 saved from each tribe of Israel, it is a minuscule number. And if it is not to be taken literally, then it is inconsistent to take the number of the tribes, or the nation Israel as literal.

Moreover, Levi is listed here when it is not normally listed in the tribes of Israel. And the tribe of Joseph, through Manasseh, is listed twice. These are just a few of the oddities which would alert any prudent student of sound hermeneutics that this is not to be taken as a literal narrative. And this is not even taking into consideration that all throughout the chapters of Revelation we see events portrayed symbolically, and what is clearly figurative language, rather than a literal straight forward history. And we will see the reasons for this unfold vividly as we search through these verses, illuminating their spiritual truth in the light of the rest of scripture.

Detailed comments on chapter 8

So far we have seen our Lord Jesus Christ's power and worthiness to judge, we have heard a demand for judgment from the martyrs, we have had a taste of the terror of an approaching judgment, and finally we have seen that God's people

will be exempt from this judgment. The next scene will be the one of tremendous action. Chapter 8 begins with a short period of fear and breathless silence and anticipation. The seventh seal making ready the seven trumpets.

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. (Revelation 8: 1 – 2)” (KJV)

The seventh seal contains seven trumpets which serve as a warning of imminent judgment. As did the first six seals, the trumpets judge only a fraction of whatever they hit. The ungodly are encouraged to heed the trumpets' warnings and repent. The trumpets serve the same purpose that the plagues did against Egypt. The silence in Heaven for one half hour is a drum-roll. An "hour" is often used to indicate a time of critical importance or activity. Make the following comparisons:

“And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. (John 12: 23)” (KJV)

“Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. (John 12: 27)” (KJV)

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (1 John 2: 18)

A half-hour hence indicates a delay before a crisis. The crisis is near but has not yet come.

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. (Revelation 8: 3 – 6)” (KJV)

The altar portrayed in verse 3 portrays the golden altar of incense which stood before the curtain separating the holy place and the holy of holies. In a sense it also stood before the throne of God since God was portrayed as sitting enthroned upon the cherubim which were on the ark.

“And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. (Exodus 25:17-22)” (KJV)

The altar in verse 5 portrays the brazen altar of burnt offering from which the coals were taken for the incense offering. The judges of Israel marched from this altar in Ezekiel 9:1-2.

“He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar. (Ezekiel 9: 1-2)” (KJV)

Incense is often used to represent prayers.

“Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. (Psalms 141: 2)” (KJV)

The Book of Revelation is itself an answer to the prayers of the believers, called the saints. Why does the angel throw the contents of the censer on the earth? We see the same thing in Ezekiel 10:2 where it precedes an approaching judgment by God against Jerusalem. Here we have the same picture as before thunder, lightning, and earthquakes are used to portray the judgment of God.

“And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight. (Ezekiel 10: 2)” (KJV)

The Seven Trumpets

The first trumpet: hail, fire, and blood

“The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. (Revelation 8: 7)” (KJV)

Compare Exodus 9:24 which describes the plague of fire and hail against Egypt. The trumpets are intended to warn and hence only a third is affected. This is not a bowl in which, as we will see, God's final judgments will be poured out against Rome. The trumpets allow an opportunity for repentance.

“So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. (Exodus 9: 24)” (KJV)

Important Note: This book is an oil painting from God. It is meant to leave an emotional impression with its vivid striking language. It is not like Romans, for instance, which appeals to the intellect with logical arguments. The trumpets act together to portray partial judgments which warn of impending doom. We should not attach a specific chronology to them. They are part of an overall picture.

The second trumpet: the sea becomes blood

“And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. (Revelation 8: 8-9)” (KJV)

A burning mountain is cast into the sea and commerce is affected. In Exodus 7:20-21, the Nile being turned to blood was a literal judgment which had a similar effect. Only God is able to collapse mountains. Zechariah 4:7 portrays God making a mountain into a plain. Exodus 19:18 portrays God descending upon Mount Sinai with fire. Amos 4:13 portrays God as treading upon the high places (mountains) of the earth. Micah 1:4 says that the mountains will melt under God. We can only look at mountains, God can remove them. A mountain is often used to portray a kingdom. Jeremiah 51:25 portrays Babylon as a destroying mountain that God would turn into a burnt mountain.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall

be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (Isaiah 2: 2)" (KJV)

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. (Matthew 21: 21)" (KJV)

The early Christians, at that time called Catholics, had the faith necessary to move mountains! The mountain of Rome was cast into the sea by God.

The third trumpet: the falling star

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. (Revelation 8: 10-11)" (KJV)

A great star falls and strikes the drinking water. Again, the plague against the Nile had the same effect in Egypt. A star is often used to indicate a divine visitation. Matt. 2:2 - "We have seen his star in the east." Matt. 24:29 - "the stars will fall from heaven" described God's visit to Jerusalem in A.D. 70. We have seen this before in Revelation. The sixth seal in 6:13 described stars falling to earth. A falling star portrays the judgment of God upon the earth. Wormwood? It was offered to by the prophets to the rebellious Israelites in Jeremiah 23:15. Wormwood is a plant whose juice is very bitter. Also called absinthium, it is used to make absinthe, a green liqueur.

"Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. (Jeremiah 23: 15)" (KJV)

The fourth trumpet: the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. (Revelation 8: 12)" (KJV)

The fourth trumpet, as did the sixth seal, effects the sun, moon, and stars. Such language is customarily used in prophetic speech to portray impending

judgments. Isaiah 34: 4-5 - used with respect to a judgment against Edom. Isaiah 13:10 and 13 - used with respect to the fall of Babylon. Joel 2:10 - used with respect to a judgment against Judah. Again that only a third is effected portrays a partial judgment which allows time for repentance. Remember, the trumpets are warnings of impending doom.

“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (Revelation 8: 13)

" **The inhabitants of the earth** " is used to portray the ungodly in contrast to the believers, the redeemed, the saints who are seen as "dwelling in heaven." (See Rev. 12:12 and 13:6.) Dwelling on earth always carries an evil association in Revelation. (See Revelation 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 12:12; 13:8; 13:12; 13:14; 14:6; 17:8.) In this context, heaven and earth portray states rather than locations. James 1:27 says that pure religion consists in keeping oneself unspotted by the world.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. (James 1: 27)” (KJV)

Romans 8:5 speaks of those who set their minds on the flesh as opposed to those who set their minds on the spirit.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. (Romans 8: 5)” (KJV)

God's people "dwell in heaven" even while still on the earth.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3: 1-2)” (KJV)

Detailed comments on chapter 9

The remaining three trumpets have a “woe” attached to each of them. This is announced in the last verse of the preceding chapter, where the angel should be the “eagle.”

“And I beheld, and heard an angel (*eagle*) flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the

earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (Revelation 8: 13)

An eagle, the bird of prey, proclaims the threefold woe. So, he acts as a herald of great judgments (Matthew 24: 28, Revelation 19: 17-18). The fifth trumpet is a special judgment on apostate Israel, because those who suffer are they “which have not the seal of God on their foreheads”.

“And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. (Revelation 9: 4)” (KJV)

The sixth angel sounded, and here the power of the Turks seems the subject, and is commanded by a voice from the horns of the golden altar to loose the four angels who are found at Euphrates, and as a result an innumerable company of horsemen is released. Their time is limited. They not only slew in war, but brought a poisonous and ruinous religion. The antichristian generation repented not under these dreadful judgments. From the sixth trumpet let us learn that God can make one enemy of the Constitutional Church of Christ (*and of all true believers*) a scourge and a plague to another. The idolatry in the remains of the Eastern Church and elsewhere, and the sins of professed Christians, render the prophecy and its fulfilment more wonderful. The attentive student of Scripture and history, may find his faith and hope strengthened by events, which in other respects fill one’s heart with anguish and tears, while he sees that men who escape these plagues, repent not of their evil works, but go on with idolatries, wickedness, and cruelty, till the wrath of God comes on them to the utmost. Let us now go into detail.

The fifth trumpet: the opening of the bottomless pit

“And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. (Revelation 9: 1-2)” (KJV)

This is the first of the three woes predicted by the eagle in 8:13.

“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (Revelation 8: 13)” (KJV)

The star fallen from heaven is spoken of as "he" who has been given a key of the ray of the bottomless pit; that is, he has authority over the pit. He opens the ray of the bottomless pit and causes darkness to cover the sun. This star seems to represent Satan.

"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. (Luke 10: 18)" (KJV)

Lightning and stars falling from heaven, as we have seen, are often used to portray God's judgment. In the following, Satan is called the ruler of this world.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John 12: 31)" (KJV)

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (John 14: 30)" (KJV)

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. (John 16: 11)" (KJV)

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2: 14-15)" (KJV)

Satan is also portrayed here as having the power of death and bondage to the fear of death. A dark cloud of smoke is seen rising from the pit to darken the sky.

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4: 3-4)" (KJV)

That is, Satan is portrayed as 'blinding' people's minds to keep them from seeing the true light of the gospel. The smoke from the pit portrays the spiritual and moral blindness which Satan causes. Note that this is a punishment from God. Moral and spiritual blindness is a disease which destroys the heart of a person or a nation. The Bible often portrays such a condition as a punishment from God:

1. **Romans 1:24-28** God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity
2. **2 Thessalonians 2:11** God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false.

3. **Matthew 11:25** At that time Jesus declared, 'I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes.'
4. **Mark 4:11-12** "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Remember that the lowering of moral standards contributed directly to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. (Revelation 9: 3 – 12)" (KJV)

Locusts: Compare the eighth plague against Egypt. This is the first trumpet that directly affects man. The first four only affected man indirectly through his environment. This trumpet brings torment but not death. Really, the torment is portrayed as being so extreme that those afflicted wish to be dead. Why five months? Some commentators say that this is the usual duration of a locust plague. Their description, which combines beauty with vicious power, further emphasises the extreme horror and terror associated with this judgment. Decadence often hides its destructive power with a thin appearance of beauty.

It looks attractive to the outer man while it devours the inner man with its "teeth of a lion."

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (I Peter 5: 8)" (KJV)

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11: 14)" (KJV)

Those sealed with the mark of God in Revelation chapter 7 in anticipation of the tribulation were not harmed. Read Ezekiel chapter 9. The decadence and moral decay of Rome was not a punishment against God's people but it did affect God's people. Many lost their lives because of it. The locusts' king is Satan. His name means destroyer in both Greek and Hebrew. Satan is king of the abyss. Satan is the prince of the powers of the air (Eph. 2:2).

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2: 1 – 2)" (KJV)

Note that Satan is seen here as God's instrument of punishment and judgment. A common misconception is that God and Satan are locked in a battle of good versus evil the outcome of which is uncertain. Satan was created and is used by God when and how he sees fit. Satan was defeated at the cross:

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (John 12: 31-32)" (KJV)

Jesus' death judged the world, not Jesus. Jesus' death defeated Satan, not Jesus. Jesus' death draws, not repels, all men. Satan was defeated at what he probably thought was his greatest triumph.

The sixth trumpet: the four angels released

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the *golden altar which is before God*, *Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet*, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and

brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. (Revelation 9: 13-19)" (KJV)

The sixth trumpet portrays warfare as an instrument of God's judgment. This judgment is released by a voice from the altar. Revelation 8: 3-5 says that the judgments in this book were prompted by prayers from God's people for justice. The four angels represent armies which God would use against Rome. It has been said that 'War made Rome.' God is saying here that war will also unmake Rome.

The angels are 'released' by a voice from the altar; that is, they are under God's control and direction. Why are they portrayed as being allowed to cross the Euphrates river? Crossing the Euphrates was a vivid picture from the Old Testament used here to represent the threat of military power. The Assyrians and Babylonians crossed the Euphrates river to attack the Jews.

"In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. (Isaiah 7: 20)" (KJV)

"Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. (Isaiah 8: 7-8)" (KJV)

The river is used to portray military might. The threat is also enforced by the huge number of invading horsemen which are seen. Twice ten thousand times ten thousand' is two hundred million. This vast number increases the atmosphere of terror and emphasises the great power which God has at his disposal. Similar imagery is used in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 with regard to Gog and Magog. (We will discuss this passage of European prophecy later.) As before, only a third is killed; that is, this judgment at first is only partial and allows for repentance. Why are the horses described in this way? The description further increases the level of terror which this picture intends to convey. The intent is to frighten.

"The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. (Joel 2: 4)" (KJV)

“Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. (Habakkuk 1: 8)” (KJV)

Joel 2:4 uses similar language in portraying the Babylonians as locusts invading Judah. Also, Habakkuk 1:8 uses similar language with regard to Chaldean horsemen (more fierce than the evening wolves). In the Old Testament such pictures were intended to frighten and did not literally occur. We have the same situation here. This army literally portrays an army of 200,000,000 Chinese invaders yet the horses represent mobilised ballistic missile launchers.

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. (Revelation 9: 20-21)” (KJV)

These early judgments are partial and allow for repentance. Those remaining, however, do not repent but instead continue with their idolatry and murder. Like the Sodomites they continued, even after being blinded by God, to look for a door to commit iniquity. The trumpets had not been able to convince them to repent. Later judgments will not give them any chance to repent at all.

Observe that Chapter 9 portrayed two types of judgments from God: Internal corruption and external invasion. Compare the reasons behind the decline and collapse of Rome. The question at this point is: How will this unrelenting, powerful enemy be stopped? These judgments had an effect on Rome which was similar to the effect the plagues had on Pharaoh - he hardened his heart and increased his persecutions. God's people need assurance and comfort. The next chapters 10 - 13 provide this.

5. **General comments on Chapters 10 – 13.** This section gives still further details of the same judgments as the preceding sections, but restricted apparently to the last 1,260 days of dispensation, i.e., the last “half-week, the last three and a half years referred to in Daniel.

In chapter ten we have the “preface of blessing,” namely a vision of the Lord’s coming in power and glory, the “little book” symbolising possibly the preceding witness-bearing of the faithful ones referred to above.

In chapter eleven we have Israel's history during 1.260 days, the chief feature being the testimony of "the two witnesses," who many regard as Moses and Elijah returned in the flesh to the earth.

In chapters twelve and thirteen we have Christianity cast out from the city of the persecuted.² This is not the Constitutional Church of Christ, which we are to remember is caught up with the Lord, but the Christian system under the special circumstances of that period as previously stated. The "male child" possibly represents the converts to Christianity in Jerusalem just prior to the absolute reign, the Antichrist being some secular dictator represented by the beast. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire federated under him and the seven heads possibly the seven systems, commercial, military, educational, political, ecclesiastical, etc., which contribute to the unity or federation mentioned before. The second beast is an ecclesiastical head subordinate to the Antichrist.

Detailed, Revelation chapters 10 to 13

Chapter 10

The pause before the seventh trumpet, and John eats the scroll

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. (Revelation 10: 1 – 3)" (KJV)

This mighty angel is a very high ranking representative of God - possibly Jesus himself. Many feel that "the angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament was really Jesus preincarnate - a so called "Christophany" or preincarnate appearance of Christ. The Angel of the Lord told Hagar in Genesis 16:10:

"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. (Genesis 16: 10)" (KJV)

² Some prefer to think of the woman in chapter twelve as Israel, and the male child as the Messiah. Verse 5 with Psalm 2 seems to justify such an application. He was "caught up" at the ascension. Meanwhile Israel as a nation is dispersed but will be restored, and during the tribulation of the 1.260 days will "flee into the wilderness," as some interpret it, will receive protection from some of the Gentile nations confederated under the Antichrist.

In Genesis 16 verse 13 Hagar remarked:

“And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?”

Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush?

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (Exodus 3: 1 – 3)” (KJV)

And, God:

“And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. (Exodus 3: 4)” (KJV)

“And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? (Judges 6: 11 – 14)” (KJV)

“But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. (Judges 13: 21-22)” (KJV)

The ministry of the Angel in the Old Testament is similar to that of Christ's:

1. The Angel of the Lord reveals God's word in Exodus chapter three.
2. He calls leaders in Judges chapter thirteen.
3. He is a deliverer in Exodus chapter fourteen and Judges chapter six.
4. He is a protector in Psalm thirty-four.

5. He is an intercessor in Zechariah chapter one.
6. He is an advocate in Zechariah chapter three.
7. He confirms God's covenant in Genesis chapter twenty-two.
8. He is a comforter in Genesis chapter sixteen. (Do compare with Matthew 11:28.)

So, although Jesus is not an angel, this angel may be used here to portray him. The description of this angel is similar to descriptions of Jesus which is elsewhere in this book:

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. (Revelation 1: 12-16)” (KJV)

He stands on both sea and land; that is, he has universal authority and great power. The seven thunders may represent the seven bowls containing God's wrath which will later be poured out on Rome. They would then signify a complete judgment. What is the little scroll or little book? This is the commission to John. It represents both the message John is to relate and his responsibility to relate that message. By eating the book later in verse 9, John is seen as accepting that responsibility.

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the

prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (Revelation 10: 1-11)" (KJV)

Ezekiel is also portrayed as eating a book in Ezekiel 2:8 and Ezekiel 3:3.

"But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. (Ezekiel 2: 8)" (KJV)

"And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. (Ezekiel 3: 3)" (KJV)

The pronouncement of judgment by the seven thunders was not to be revealed at this time. John is told not to write down what they said. God chose not to reveal everything about the coming judgment against Rome at this time. The details concealed here may have been revealed later in the book but we cannot know for sure. Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds us that there are some things which God keeps to himself and does not reveal.

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29: 29)" (KJV)

The angel lifts his right hand. This was done when taking an oath. The raised hand signifies that what is being done or said is taking place in full view of Heaven. It emphasises the solemn and momentous nature of what is being said. What does he swear? That there would be no more delay.

In the seventh trumpet, the complete judgment of God against Rome would be fulfilled. John heard Jesus swear that there would be no more delay. The seventh seal contained the seven trumpets. Similarly, the seventh trumpet will contain seven bowls. As we discussed earlier, this mystery is something which was formerly not understood but which has now been revealed; that is, the conflict of the Church with Rome, the terrors ahead for the Church, and the Church's

ultimate victory over Rome. This mystery would be fulfilled without delay. It, like everything in the book, was near and would shortly come to pass:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1: 1 – 3)” (KJV)

John is not given the book but is told to take it. This emphasises his commitment to undertake the responsibility of recording and presenting God's message. As in Ezekiel, John eats the book to signify his acceptance of this responsibility. He makes the message a part of himself. It was bitter; that is, it contained bad news in that the Constitutional Church of believers in Jesus Christ would suffer great persecutions. But, it was also sweet; that is, it had a happy ending in that the Church, God's Assembly, would ultimately triumph. Compare also Psalm 19: 9 -10 and Psalm 119:103 - 104:

“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (Psalm 19: 9-10)” (KJV)

“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. (Psalm 119: 103-104)” (KJV)

Jeremiah was also appointed to be a prophet to the nations.

“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. (Jeremiah 1: 5)” (KJV)

“See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant. (Jeremiah 1: 10)”

John will have much to say about the nations and kingdoms of the world in chapters 17 and 18, as we will see later in this study.

Chapter 11

“And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. (Revelation 11: 1-4) (KJV)

A measuring rod was often used in the Old Testament to make a separation between what is holy and what is not. Ezekiel records a vision regarding the restored temple.

“He turned about to the west side, and measured five hundred reeds with the measuring reed. He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place. (Ezekiel 42: 19-20) (KJV)

What was being measured? The temple, the altar, and those who worship there. When this book was written there was only one temple: The individual Church, each believer, part of a great whole.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3: 16)” (KJV)

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2: 18-22)” (KJV)

The word for temple as found here indicates the inner sanctuary where only priests were allowed. All Christians are now priests and therefore we all have this admittance.

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1: 6)” (KJV)

Why was the outer court not measured? The whole structure is the church or holy city (the inner sanctuary and the outer court). God is telling the universal one church in diversity that it will soon undergo a period of intense persecution but that it will be sustained. Rome will be allowed to trample the Church for a time but it will not be allowed to destroy its heart; that is, its inner sanctuary. God is telling the Constitutional Church of true believers in Jesus Christ that he will not permit it to be annihilated. Why 42 months? This is the same as 1260 days (42 months x 30 days) and is also found in the book of Revelation in which context it is later called "time, times and half a time"; that is, three and one half (42 months is 3.5 years). As elsewhere in Revelation, this time period is used to symbolize a state of affairs.

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12: 6) (KJV)

"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (Revelation 12: 14)" (KJV)

To determine what is portrayed, we should first consider where else it is used in the book: 42 months is the period of:

1. The beast's authority in.

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. (Revelation 13: 5) (KJV)

2. The period during which the holy city will be trampled.

"But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. (Revelation 11: 2) (KJV)

3. The period during which the witnesses will prophecy.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. (Revelation 11: 3) (KJV)

4. The period during which the woman will be nourished in the wilderness in.

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12: 6)” (KJV)

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. (Revelation 12: 14)” (KJV)

We also see this time period in the book of Daniel where it is the period of time during which the little horn will persecute God's people.

“And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7: 25)” (KJV)

In each case it portrays a period of time during which God's people will be persecuted yet sustained. Where did it originate? Seven indicates completeness. Therefore, a broken seven indicates incompleteness; that is, by saying that the persecution will last 3.5 years, God is saying that the persecution is temporary.

“Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. (James 5: 17- 18)” (KJV)

Who are the two witnesses? The Church ? In verse 4 they are called two olive trees and two lampstands.

In Zechariah chapter four two olive trees are used to denote two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. They are Zerubbabel of the royal line and Joshua, a priest. God led the nation through them. What combined both the priesthood and royalty? Obviously, the Church.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2: 9)” (KJV)

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1: 6)” (KJV)

The churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are portrayed as golden lampstands. However, why two witnesses? These witnesses testify and two is the number of confirmed testimony.

1. “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. (John 5: 31-32)” (KJV)
2. “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. (Matthew 18: 16)” (KJV)

They prophecy in sackcloth; that is, they continue to prophecy even under persecution. The Church continued to operate even while being persecuted. Rome may have trampled the Church, but the influencing Rome was not able to stop the Church.

“And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11: 5 – 8)” (KJV)

Verses 5 and 6 portrays the scene from God's perspective. The two witnesses (which represent the Church) are represented as being inevitable. Anyone who harms them is doomed to be killed. They have power to shut the sky that no rain may fall. They have power to smite the earth with plagues. They testify for the duration of the persecution, that is for 3.5 years.

“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. (Revelation 11: 2 – 3)” (KJV)

Remember that 3.5 (being half of 7) indicates that the persecution would be temporary. The Constitutional Church of all true believers in Jesus Christ continued to operate (and, in fact, flourished) while being persecuted. Revelation chapter 11, verses 7 and 8 portray the scene from Rome's perspective. After this persecution, however, the beast from the bottomless pit

makes war on the witnesses, conquers and kills them. John is showing us both sides of the coin. First, (in Revelation 11:5 and 6) we see the Constitutional Church of Christ as being powerful and inevitable and then (Revelation 11: 7 and 8) we see the Church being conquered and killed by the beast. Is this defeat a permanent defeat? No. The beast (which we will later see is Rome) does not have a final victory over the Church. The primary message of Revelation is one of victory for the Church. Read Daniel 7:23-27 which speaks of the Church's victory over Rome:

“Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Daniel 7: 23 – 27)” (KJV)

Rome will believe it is victorious. Rome will appear to be victorious. The Church may have even thought that Rome was going to be victorious. For this reason, for now, Rome is portrayed as being victorious. That victory, however, is only an illusion. What is the great city? Sodom? Rome, also, was a centre of iniquity. Egypt? Rome, also, oppressed and persecuted God's people. Jerusalem? Rome, also, was a centre of a false and perverted religion. The great city portrayed here is Rome.

“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. (Revelation 11: 9-10)” (KJV)

Those who hate the Church celebrate and rejoice at its apparent demise. The Church, by not compromising with evil, had been "a torment" to those living in sin. “Them that dwelt on the earth” that is, the wicked, were glad to get rid of it. How long do they gloat? 3.5 days. What does this signify? Their celebration is premature and temporary. It will not last long. Why? The Church's defeat is

premature and temporary. Is the Church really defeated? No way, we will soon read.

"And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. (Revelation 11: 11-14)" (KJV)

After 3.5 days the Church comes to life again. Their defeat, which *appeared* to be complete, was in fact only a temporary setback. Their ascension into Heaven, like Christ's, indicates their complete vindication which takes place "in sight of their foes." The survival of the Church over its adversaries is one of the best evidences of its divine origin. A great earthquake, as elsewhere, serves as an omen of a coming judgment on those who rejoiced at the apparent defeat of the Church. Only a fraction is affected; that is, this judgment is not final, yet. More is on the way. Why 7000? It foreshadows a complete judgment that is coming and which will not allow for repentance. Those remaining give glory to God. Why? (These people are not Christians.) Their motive is not love but fear. What did Nebuchadnezzar say after he saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come out of the furnace unhurt?

"Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. (Daniel 3: 28 – 29)" (KJV)

What was Nebuchadnezzar's driving force? These people "worship" with the same enthusiasm. Their fate remains unchanged. The time for repentance has passed. (No atheist or agnostic will remain so forever! When sight replaces faith, all will believe.) The third woe which is on the way is the seventh trumpet. This will be the third and final woe of those predicted by the eagle in Revelation 8:13.

“And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (Revelation 8: 13)” (KJV)

Recapitulation: The message John is told to communicate is that the Church will undergo severe hardship and may at times appear to be defeated but God is on its side and all will be well in the end. The Constitutional Church's final victory is assured. So far, John has relayed this message in two ways:

1. The city of God will be trampled under foot for 3.5 years but the inner sanctuary will be protected.
2. Two witnesses prophecy for 3.5 years and are then killed by the beast. Their defeat is only temporary, however. After 3.5 days they come to life and ascend to Heaven.

In Revelation chapters 12 and 13 this message will be told again in two different ways:

3. In Revelation chapter 12, a woman will be strained to flee into the wilderness for 3.5 years yet will therein find a place of nourishment and protection.
4. In Revelation chapter 13, a beast will overcome God's people. However, his authority will only last for 3.5 years.

The seventh trumpet: the consummation

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 11: 15)” (KJV)

The seventh trumpet contains seven bowls full of God's wrath. This trumpet marks the end of Rome. Remember 10:7 - " But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." As the seventh trumpet sounds, the seven bowls containing the full and destructive wrath of God are poured out. Although we will hear the details later, the bowls are poured out when the trumpet sounds. At this point the task is done and the result is inevitable. For this reason, the cry goes out: " The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Why does it say the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord? This portrays a public vindication of something that was already

true in fact! This verse does not mark the beginning of God's kingdom or Christ's authority over anyone. It portrays a public re-affirmation of that authority. Reread:

1. **Revelation 1:5.** Jesus is (not will be) the ruler of the kings of the earth.

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. (Revelation 1: 5)” (KJV)

2. **Ephesians 1:21.** Jesus sits (not will sit) at God's right hand, far above every principality and power and every name that is named.

“Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. (Ephesians 1: 21)” (KJV)

3. **1 Peter 3:22:**

“Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. (1 Peter 3: 22)” (KJV)

4. **Psalm 29:10:**

“The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever. (Psalm 29: 10)” (KJV)

5. **Daniel 4:17:**

“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. (Daniel 4: 17)” (KJV)

The word "kingdom" as used here includes more than the Church. (The two terms are no way synonyms.) Here the kingdom includes all of the people and nations of the world. Jesus has all authority. In the broadest sense, the universe is his kingdom. Jesus does not just have authority over believers. He is king of everyone and everything. Verse 15 says that he shall reign forever. Again, note that Jesus is reigning now and was reigning then. He reigns now with authority delegated to him by the Father but one day he will bring his work to a close and offer the kingdom to his Father. At that point he will begin to share the rule.

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.. (1 Corinthians 15: 24-28)” (KJV)

But has not death already been defeated? Yes. We were freed from the bondage of sin and death by the cross. Death has been defeated yet it continues. Rome was portrayed here as being defeated yet it continued for quite awhile. Christ will reign until death and his other enemies are not just defeated but are in fact destroyed.

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15: 26)” (KJV)

“And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11: 16-19)” (KJV)

God has always reigned and will always reign. He sat enthroned at the flood. This passage speaks of a new expression of his reign. It portrays a public vindication and reaffirmation of his reign. Thy wrath came: The seven bowls containing God's wrath were poured out when the seventh trumpet sounded. We will read the details about the bowls later. The details regarding this judgment is found in Rev. 20:11-15.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which

were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20: 11-15)" (KJV)

His servants will receive the deserved reward; that is, the Constitutional Church of all true believers in Jesus Christ will be victorious. Is this the final judgment? Remember the time frame of the book. It contains things which were to shortly come to pass. The time for fulfilment was near when the book was written. Jesus has already sworn that judgment will occur without delay. The ark of his covenant provides reassurance that God remembers his promises. It is always in his presence to remind him. Thunder, lightning, earthquake, hail: He promised to judge and punish the Church's enemies. He promised to vindicate the Church. These Old Testament symbols of judgment remind us that God has fulfilled his promises. Remember Revelation 10:7:

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. (Revelation 10: 7)" (KJV)

Chapter 12

The seven personages

The woman, Israel

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. (Revelation 12: 1-2)" (KJV)

Who is this woman? She wears the sun and the moon which Genesis 1:17 reminds us were intended to give light to the world.

"And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. (Genesis 1: 17)" (KJV)

She wears a crown of twelve stars. Remember that twelve is the number of God's people (twelve patriarchs, twelve tribes, twelve apostles). Does she represent the Constitutional Church of Christ ? No, she is portrayed as having existed before the birth of Christ. However, she includes the Church. She represents all of God's people throughout time ever since the world began.

God's people portrayed as a woman:

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54: 1 and further reading)" (KJV)

"Now why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? For pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. (Micah 4: 9 and further reading)" (KJV)

Who is the child? Jesus descended through the Jewish line; that is, he came from those who were God's people under the old covenant. So, the child is Jesus who from a physical perspective was brought forth from out of God's people.

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. (Revelation 12: 5)" (KJV)

The destiny of the woman depends upon this child; her sin made his birth necessary. In Revelation 12, the woman is identified as the community of God's people whom the Messiah was given. The woman is certainly not the mother of Jesus, as Roman Catholics may think.

The dragon

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. (Revelation 12: 3-4)" (KJV)

A powerful, blood thirsty dragon appears waiting to devour the child. Where have we seen this same cast assembled before?

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (Genesis 3: 15)" (KJV)

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. (Romans 16: 20)" (KJV)

Who then is this dragon? Satan acting through Rome. That Rome is involved is clear from the dragon's description: seven heads with diadems and ten horns. The details regarding these descriptions will be given when they appear again in Revelation 13:1 and 17:7.

The stars may also represent God's holy (*separated*) people.

"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (Genesis 15: 5)" (KJV)

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12: 3)" (KJV)

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Matthew 13: 43)" (KJV)

The male child, Christ

"And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. (Revelation 12: 5-6)" (KJV)

With the above quotations we have further evidence that the child represents Jesus. He was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalm 2: 8-9)" (KJV)

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2: 26-28)" (KJV)

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the

winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (Revelation 19: 15)" (KJV)

Before the dragon could devour the child he was caught up to God and to his throne. That is, Jesus ascended to Heaven and out of Satan's claws. Satan failed to defeat Jesus when he was most susceptible. He certainly will not succeed any better after Jesus has ascended to reign from Heaven! The woman is separated from the child for 3.5 years. That is, the separation is neither permanent nor complete. God nourishes and sustains her during the interim. God assures his people that although they are being persecuted by Rome and although Jesus is no longer with them in person, that situation will not last forever and while it does last God will be with them to sustain them and protect them. This is the third time and the third different way that this message has been delivered to the readers of the book of Revelation. Israel was also nourished in the wilderness while running Egypt from the great dragon.

"Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. (Ezekiel 29: 3)" (KJV)

The Archangel Michael

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12: 7-9)" (KJV)

This is not a factual war. Satan was defeated at the cross of Calvary.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John 12: 31)" (KJV)

Jesus did not need the Archangel Michael to do something he had already accomplished himself. This battle (like everything else here) is symbolic. This battle and its outcome simply emphasises the point that if Satan could not defeat Jesus while he was on the earth he certainly cannot possibly defeat him now that he is in Heaven. The Archangel Michael, the great prince, serves here as Christ's representative.

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as

never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12: 1)" (KJV)

Perhaps he is the angel portrayed in Revelation 10. No place is found in Heaven for the dragon and his angels. The dragon's assault to Heaven is a complete failure. His defeat is decisive. When Jesus ascended he had completely defeated Satan. It is good to remember the following:

- 1 John 3: 8** "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (KJV)
- John 16: 11** "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (KJV)
- John 16:33** "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (KJV)
- Colossians 2:15** "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (KJV)
- Hebrews 2:14** "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (KJV)

Rejoicing over Satan's expulsion, while the power behind Rome as already been defeated.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12: 10-12)" (KJV)

Now have salvation, power, the kingdom of God, and the authority of Christ come. We have seen language like this before.

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord,

and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 11: 15)" (KJV)

As before, this passage does not mark the beginning of God's kingdom or Christ's authority. Instead it portrays a public vindication and reaffirmation of those things.

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (Luke 21: 31)" (KJV)

Satan was defeated by the death of Christ and by the forgiveness of sins which was made available through his shed blood on the cross of Calvary. The death of Christ was a defeat for Satan - but not for him. The death of Christ was a judgment - but not against him, but against Satan. Those who conquered loved not their lives even unto death.

Christianity consists in a denial of self; a forsaking of one's own concerns in favour of others.

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. (Corinthians 15: 16-21)" (KJV)

Any happiness we derive from following Christ is based on Christ himself. That is, the Christian life without Christ would be a truly miserable life.

Matthew 16:24 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (KJV)

Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." (KJV)

John 12:25 "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." (KJV)

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. (Revelation 12: 12)" (KJV)

Those who dwell in Heaven are told to rejoice. Remember that God's people, even those on earth, are portrayed in the Book of Revelation as dwelling in Heaven. The phrase "those who dwell upon the earth" always refers to the enemies of God. This parallels the New Testament teaching that *spiritually* Christians do dwell in Heaven. Read the apostle Paul writing to the Colossians and the Philippians:

Colossians 3:1-2 “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Philippians 3:18-20 “(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

God's people are told to rejoice because their victory is assured. The Lamb has conquered Satan through his death and the power of his word. He could not defeat Jesus while he was on earth and certainly will not be able to do any better now that Jesus has ascended to Heaven. The power behind Rome was utterly and completely defeated at the cross of Calvary. Rome will be the next to go. Satan used Rome without any regard for its welfare; that is, Satan came down to it "in great wrath." Satan knows his time is short. That is, Satan's opportunity to attack the Constitutional Church through Rome will not last forever. Just as Satan grasped his opportunity and attempted to kill Jesus in his infancy, Satan also saw an opportunity and attempted to crush the Constitutional Church in its infancy. In each case, Satan failed and was utterly defeated.

Satan persecutes the woman

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. (Revelation 12: 13 – 16)” (KJV)

The dragon saw that he had been thrown down to earth, so he pursued the mother of the child. That is, Satan realised that his plans to defeat Jesus had go

wrong so he began to attack Jesus' followers. (When did Satan realise his plan to kill Jesus was being used against him? Perhaps he was behind the dream Pilate's wife had in Matthew 27:19.)

“When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. (Matthew 27: 19)”. (KJV)

Remember, persecution does not mean that God is not in control. He was in control at the cross and he was in control while Rome persecuted the primitive Church. The woman is given wings with which to escape. That is, the woman is protected and preserved by God. Wings are often used to symbolise God's protection:

Exodus 19:4 “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.”

Deuteronomy 32:11 “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings.”

Psalm 36:7 “How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”

Isaiah 40: 31 “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

The dragon attempts to kill the woman with a flood yet the earth swallows the water. Where did God literally use dry land to defeat Satan?

“And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, And took off their chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians,

upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. (Exodus 14: 21-31)

“He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. (Psalm 106: 9)” (KJV)

In these last verses, God is portrayed as defeating Satan on his own ground. The conflict between Egypt and the Israelites in the Pentateuch parallels the conflict between Rome and the Church in many ways. Events that occurred literally in Exodus are frequently used symbolically in the Book of Revelation to remind the reader of the earlier similar conflict in Egypt and its final outcome. The dragon wages war against the offspring the woman. The woman herself and her child are beyond the reach of the dragon. That is, Jesus and the Church (as a whole) are inexorable and cannot be defeated by Satan. However, Satan still wages war against individual Christians; that is, against the other offspring of the woman. The promise given in the Book of Revelation that Satan will not be able to defeat the Constitutional Church of all true believers in Jesus Christ is not new or unique to this book. Remember, Jesus’ statement in Matthew 16:18:

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16: 18) (KJV)

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2: 14)” (KJV)

Personage five – the Israelite remnant

Verse 17 portrays the godly remnant.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12: 17)” (KJV)

Chapter 12 ends by saying that "the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus."

Chapter 13 provides the details of this attack. In particular, Chapter 13 will introduce us to two of the weapons which Satan used in his battle against the Constitutional Church of Christ; namely, a beast from the sea and a beast from the earth. As we will see, these beasts each represent Rome but do so from different perspectives. Many of the images in this chapter may also be found in Daniel 7.

Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 and 17 comprise some of the most impressive examples of predictive prophecy in the Bible.

Their fall to earth may indicate that the dragon caused them to fall away from God into sin, become part of "those who dwell upon the earth." This is a further indication of the power of the dragon. The dragon waits to devour the child: Satan had attempted to do this while acting directly through Herod the Great, but, of course, he had even then been acting indirectly through Rome since it was by their authority that Herod ruled. Jeremiah 51:34 we see Babylon swallowing God's people "like a monster." Egypt, who also tried to devour a servant of God as a child (Moses) and whoever persecuted God's people, is called a great dragon in Ezekiel 29: 3.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicacies, he hath cast me out. (Jeremiah 51: 34)” (KJV)

“Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. (Ezekiel 29: 3)” (KJV)

Chapter 13

Chapter 13: 1 - 10

Verses 1 - 5

Verses 6 - 10

The beast out of the sea

The beast – the Roman Prince or Hierarch

The beast's wicked vocation

Chapter 13: 11 - 18

Personage seven – the beast out of the earth, and the false prophet

The beast out of the sea

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Revelation 13: 1-2)” (KJV)

Who stood on the sand of the sea? Probably the dragon but maybe John. A beast rises out of the sea. The sea is often used to portray the restless, unsettled nations of men. Make the following comparison:

1. Isaiah 57: 20

“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” (KJV)

2. Revelation 17:15

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” (KJV)

3. Isaiah 17:12

“Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!” (KJV)

As we will see, this beast represents Rome civil and religious (which rose from the restless, unsettled nations of the world) from its standpoint as a persecuting power. This beast has seven heads with ten horns and ten diadems. This is similar to the description of the dragon found in Revelation 12:3.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. (Revelation 12: 3)” (KJV)

The beast is a weapon, or better a manifestation of the dragon. It is Satan the driving force behind Rome against the true Church of true believers in Jesus Christ. The dragon gives his power and authority to the beast to act on his behalf. What does the representation of the seven heads mean? Chapter 17 is very obliging in answering questions concerning the present chapter. In particular, Chapter 17 contains a short commentary in which an angel explains to John the meaning of some of the things, which he has seen, such as:

“And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Chapter 17: 7-8)” (KJV)

The angel steps outside of the vision in order to comment upon what John is seeing:

“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.” (Revelation 17: 9-10)” (KJV)

First, the seven heads represent seven mountains. A classical description of Rome was "the city which sat upon seven hills." Archaeological Note: A coin minted during the reign of Vespasian has been found which represents the city of Rome as a woman seated on its seven hills: Palatine, Capitoline, Esquiline, Aventine, Quirinal, Caelian, and Viminal.

If anything in this book should be clear to an honest reader, it is that the earthly criminal in this book is Rome!

Chapter 17 tells us that the seven heads also represent seven kings: five of which have fallen, one of which is presently in power, and one which is yet to come but will remain only a short while. Before going any further, we need a short historical review. Consider the following chart regarding the first 11 emperors of Rome:

1. Augustus, 31B.C.E-A.D.14
2. Tiberius, A.D 14-37
3. Caligula, A.D 37-41
4. Claudius, A.D 41-54
5. Nero, A.D 54-68 (Ruthlessly persecuted Christians)

6. Galba, A.D 68-69 (Reigned 7 months - hacked to pieces)
7. Otho, A.D 69 (Reigned 95 days - committed suicide)
8. Vitellius, A.D 69 (Reigned 8 months - murdered)
9. Vespasian, A.D 69-79
10. Titus, A.D 79-81 (Reigned for twenty six months)
11. Domitian, A.D 81-96 (Renewed Nero's attack on the Constitutional Church of Christ)

Let us now compare the prophecies found in Daniel 7, Revelation chapters 13 and 17. Open your Bibles.

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. (Daniel 7: 7-8)” (KJV)

“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. (Daniel 7: 19-25)” (KJV)

So, in Daniel 7 we see ten horns which represent ten kings (verse 24). Three of the horns are uprooted (verse 8). Another horn arises which makes war on the people of God (verse 21). This last horn is the eighth horn; that is, we have ten at first, then seven after three are uprooted, and finally eight when the last horn appears.

As we have seen, Revelation 13 speaks of seven heads that represent kings (see the corresponding explanation in Revelation 17:10.) As will be seen in Chapter 17, the ten horns in Revelation 13 are not the same as the ten horns in Daniel 7. Revelation 17 speaks of seven heads that are seven kings (verse 10). In addition it speaks of an eighth which belongs to the seven (verse 11). (So, the eighth horn from Daniel 7 is portrayed here as the eighth head. That is, the horns in Daniel correspond to heads in Revelation. We will discuss the horns in Revelation shortly.) Look at the chart again. The seven kings in Revelation are the seven kings in Daniel which remain after three are uprooted. The three uprooted kings are completely ignored in Revelation. The eighth king would then actually be the eleventh to reign; that is, there had been seven kings and three uprooted kings.

Who is the fourth beast in Daniel 7 from which these kings arise? It is Rome. The first three beasts are Babylon (lion; Daniel 7:4), Medo-Persia (bear; Daniel 7:5), and Greece (leopard; Daniel 7:6).

“The first was like a **lion**, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a **bear**, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a **leopard**, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. (Daniel 7: 4-6)” (KJV)

Daniel 7:12 tells us that these beasts lost their dominion but did not die. The beast in Revelation 13 is portrayed as being part leopard, part bear, and part lion. Rome, the fourth beast in Daniel 7, embodied all of the wickedness of the first three beasts and much more.

So, it is described as being composed of pieces of the previous three kingdoms. Now, we may ask ourselves again the question, ‘when was the book of Revelation written?’ Revelation 17:10 says that five kings have fallen, and one is yet to come who will remain only a little while. The five who have fallen would be the first five: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero. Remembering that Revelation ignores the next three (who ruled and died all within a span of less than two years), the one who is yet to come, must be Vespasian. So, the book was written during the reign of Vespasian. The seventh who is yet to come and will remain only a short while would be Titus who followed Vespasian and reigned only 26 months.

In addition, Revelation 17:8 implies that the book was written during a quiet period in the persecution:

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17: 8)" (KJV)

Revelation 17:11 tells us that the "beast which was, and is not" comes back as the eighth king (Domitian):

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (Revelation 17: 11)" (KJV)

The beast who was is Rome under Nero, the beast who is to come is Rome under Domitian, the time when the beast "is not" describes the time between Nero and Domitian when the persecution against the Church subsided. Tertullian speaks of Nero as "the first emperor who dyed his sword in Christian blood, when our religion was but just arising at Rome."

Let us go to the Church History and the Church Fathers. Eusebius writes that Domitian "finally showed himself the successor of Nero's campaign of hostility to God. He was the second to promote persecution against us." Tertullian called Domitian "a limb of the bloody Nero." Rumours circulated that Domitian was actually Nero who they said had either returned to life or never actually died. Why are the three short lived kings ignored? So Domitian would be the eighth king. Why did God want to associate Domitian with the number eight? For dramatic effect! The number eighth in the Bible refers to a resurrection or new beginning. The eighth day denotes the start of a new week. Male children were circumcised on the eighth day to portray their new relationship with God. The year following seven sabbatical years was the year of Jubilee when all things were renewed (Leviticus chapter 25). Domitian was thought to be a resurrected Nero and began the persecution anew. Note that the heads are said to have blasphemous names written upon them. This refers to the deification of the Roman emperors. Domitian ordered himself to be addressed as "Our Lord God Domitian." The Roman emperors were also called "the sons of God". The three short-lived kings were ignored for dramatic effect! What do the ten horns in Revelation 13:1 represent? Again, Chapter 17 gives us some suggestions.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. (Revelation 17: 12)" (KJV)

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and

to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. (Revelation 17: 16-17)" (KJV)

Summary of suggestions provided by Chapter 17:

1. The horns are kings.
2. These kings do not presently rule but have given their power to Rome.
3. These kings will receive authority at a time of critical importance or activity.
4. They will be partly responsible for Rome's destruction.

The consultant kings were tied to the service of Rome in order to defend its frontiers and serve as listening posts to the outside world. In return, they were supported by the Romans against internal subversive movements and allowed a free hand inside their own countries. So, Rome was spared the trouble and expense of administering these territories; and the formula worked well.

"And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, **the kingdom shall be divided**; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so **the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken**. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, **they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another**, even as iron is not mixed with clay. (Daniel 2: 41-43)" (KJV)

"Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. (Daniel 11: 39)" (KJV)

Why are there ten horns? E. W. Bullinger in his book *Number in Scripture* (p. 243) says that the number '10' implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete. So, ten horns may simply represent all of the consultant kingdoms and federates. It may also refer to the fact that they, in a sense, drove the final nail into Rome's coffin - they completed the cycle.

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. (Revelation 13: 3)" (KJV)

Compare the above with Revelation 5:6:

"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. (Revelation 5: 6)" (KJV)

"stood a Lamb as it had been slain" The lamb was portrayed as such. Did the wound kill the entire beast or just the head? The beast. In Revelation 13:12 we see that the wound was mortal to the first beast and not just to one of its heads.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13: 12)"

Remember that the heads of the beast represent Roman emperors. Which emperor is portrayed by this head that is slain? Nero. Why? Compare Revelation 17:8.

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast **that was, and is not, and yet is.** (Revelation 13: 12)" (KJV)

Remember that Chapter 17 is a commentary on what John had seen. The first beast represents Rome as a civil and religious persecuting power. So, the death of the beast would represent a comparative end of the persecution and the resurrection of the beast would represent a re-emergence of that persecution. Remember; see above the earlier comments regarding Nero and Domitian. The Church Father Tertullian said that Nero was "the first emperor who dyed his sword in Christian blood" and Eusebius wrote that Domitian "finally showed himself the successor of Nero's campaign of hostility to God. He was the second to promote persecution against us." It was rumoured that Domitian was actually Nero resurrected. The beast was: When Nero died, the persecution temporarily subsided. The first beast (the civil persecutor of Rome) died.

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? (Revelation 13: 4)" (KJV)

The dragon is Satan who was the driving power behind Rome against the Church; that is, he had given his authority to Rome. This beast had died and come back to life. It seemed that even God was powerless to stop it. What hope

did the Church have against an adversary which was so powerful? The situation looks hopeless, but the next verses should provide hope to an alert reader!

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Revelation 13: 5 – 10)" (KJV)

The resurrected beast is portrayed as being proud and blasphemous. Domitian, who required that he be addressed as "Our Lord God Domitian," seems to have fit the bill on both counts. He had authority for forty-two months. Now that we know what the symbol means this statement should provide cause to rejoice. Remember that a period of forty-two months (or three and a half years) implies that the current situation is temporary. A broken seven portays something that is not complete or permanent. The beast may seem invincible, but God is giving a subtle warning that all is not as it seems! The resurrected beast makes war on the Saints and is portrayed as actually conquering them.

The Church may have even thought that they had been defeated. At the time Rome appeared to be victorious and therefore they are presented as such. Earlier the persecution appeared to be over and for this reason the beast was portrayed as being dead. Remember in Revelation chapter 7 that after three and a half days (a temporary defeat!) the two witnesses (the Church) came back to life and ascended to Heaven leaving the ungodly (those that dwell upon the earth) behind.

The same event is being portrayed here in Chapter 13. (Again, we see images motivated by dramatic effect.) Verses 8 to 10 are a call for endurance and faith which is required to be a conqueror. Verse 10 says that the sufferer is in God's hands and the persecutor will be punished.

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with

the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Revelation 13: 8-10)" (KJV)

Reread verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." What is the book of life? This verse indicates that it is the complement of "those that dwell upon the earth." Who are they? As we have seen many times before, the phrase is used exclusively to portray the enemies of God. So, the book of life contains the names of God's people.

Compare Revelation 20:15 with Revelation 3:5.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20: 15)" (KJV)

What does this tell us? That it is possible for one to have his name erased from the book of life. That is, it is possible to fall from God's grace. Does this passage support predestination along the teaching of John Calvin? No. They see here the names of God's people recorded before the world was created. For sure, corporate predestination (as opposed to individual predestination) is taught in the Bible. In Romans 8:29-30 Paul writes:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (Romans 8: 29-30)" (KJV)

The Church, as a whole, was part of God's plan from the beginning and in that sense we, as an assembly (community), were predestined and foreknown. Ephesians 1: 3-6 says that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Ephesians 1: 3-6)" (KJV)

Let us return to Revelation 13: 8:

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13: 8)” (KJV)

1 Peter 1:20 confirms that Jesus was "destined before the foundation of the world."

“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. (I Peter 1: 20)” (KJV)

The phrase in question appears again in Revelation 17:8.

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17: 8)” (KJV)

Therefore, Revelation 13:8 in all similarity simply emphasises that the Church as a whole was chosen before the foundation of the world. The consistency of the scriptures forbids us from using Revelation 13:8 to throw the notion of free will out the window. (If, instead, we throw out the consistency of scripture then why are we here?) God would have all men saved but he wants us to come to him by our own will and free choice. If we can come to him by choice then we can leave him by choice. He has promised that he will not cast us out but we are still able to climb out on our own.

The beast out of the earth, also the false prophet

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Revelation 13: 11-12)” (KJV)

The first beast arose from the sea; this second beast arises from the earth. That it rises from the earth stresses its human origin. It is not divine in origin. In Revelation 13, verse 18 we will see that it is given a "human number."

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13: 18)” (KJV)

In Revelation 16:13 and 19:20 the second beast is called "the false prophet."

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (Revelation 16: 13)" (KJV)

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Revelation 19: 20)" (KJV)

This beast out of the earth is religious in nature but that religion is of human origin. Further, we see that that the second beast causes men to worship the first beast. It looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. That is, it is full of hypocrisy. It is a wolf in sheep's clothing. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Conclusion: The second beast portrays the perverted religious side of Rome just as the first beast portrayed the civil persecuting side of Rome. The first beast portrays Rome as Egypt. The second beast portrays Rome as Jerusalem. Compare Revelation 11:8.

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11: 8)" (KJV)

"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. (Revelation 13: 13-15)" (KJV)

The beast performs false miracles and lying wonders. The Roman priests were ventriloquists and magicians. Vespasian was rumoured to have raised the dead. Stephen Benko in his book *Pagan Rome and the Early Christians* (p. 128) writes that "certain elements in the official Roman religion were based on magical principles, such as haruspicium (the examination of the insides of animals) and

auspiciun (flights of birds and natural phenomena). ... magic was an accepted form of religious piety." Busts of the emperors were used to test Christians who were required to confess before them that "Caesar is Lord."

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six. (Revelation 13: 16-18)"

Remember, the economic persecution which the Christians suffered at the hands of the pagan societies, and remember Christ's message to the church in Thyatira which is discussed in Revelation chapter two. A confession that Caesar is Lord (Son of God) was often required before one was allowed to buy and sell. Just as God marked his people in Chapter 7 to indicate that they were his, the beast marks his people in Chapter 13 for the same reason. The number of the beast is 666, a human number. What does this mean? The number seven (7) meant perfection and completeness. The number 6 portrayed something that had fallen hopelessly short of perfection. Man was created on the sixth day and he fell from perfection. The number three is the number of divinity (the Godhead triune, three.) Therefore, three sixes portrays something which has fallen hopelessly short of divine perfection. Does that accurately describe this beast? Yes! This beast represents the false perverted religious side of Rome. Here, as elsewhere in the book, remember:

1. The book was intended primarily to provide comfort to the first century Christians, called Catholics, who were suffering intense persecution by Rome.
2. Numbers in the book have special meanings. In apocalyptic books the usual rule of interpretation is reversed; that is, we assume something is figurative unless there is some overriding reason to take it literally.

What does the Church need so far ? The Church needs comfort and assurance, which is exactly what Chapter 14 provides.

Chapter 14

Here we have a vision enlarging again upon certain point mentioned before. The "forethought of blessing" is read in verses 1 to 5. The Lamb on Mount Zion with the 144.000 seems to represent the remnant of Israel purified and made 'free' through the tribulation, having overcome the Antichrist, and now reigning with Christ over the earth in the millennium. The figure represents "the earthly seat of the new and heavenly power ordering the earth during the millennium. Verses 6

and 7 represent the previous witness-bearing of the eternal Gospel, which would seem to be different from the Gospel of Grace proclaimed in the present dispensation, today. Verse 8 is to be regarded as a testimony against the city of Babylon itself, which, as we saw in our study of Isaiah and Zechariah (see previous courses) is doubtless to be restored as the centre of commercial and political greatness in the world at the time of the end. Verses 9 – 12 are similarly a testimony against the system and the person of the Antichrist himself at that time reigning there. Verses 14 – 16 forecast the judgments on the nations again, especially the nations of Christianity, while verses 18 – 20 may referring probably to those which shall fall more particularly on Israel and what we know as the pagan nations.

Chapter 14

Forethought of the end of the Tribulation

Chapter 14: 1 - 5

Verses 1 - 3

Verses 4 - 5

The Lamb and the 144.000 on the Mount Zion

Identity of the 144.000

Their character and destiny

Chapter 14: 6 - 8

Verses 6 - 7

Verse 8

The fall of Babylon foreseen

Proclamation of the everlasting gospel

Fall of Babylon anticipated

Chapter 14: 9 - 13

Verses 9 - 11

Verses 12 - 13

The punishment of the wicked

Worshippers of the beast and their fate

The bliss of the martyrs

Chapter 14: 14 - 20

Verses 14 - 16

Verses 17 - 20

Glance on Armageddon

The harvest

The period

The Lamb and the 144 on the Mount Zion

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being

the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14: 1-5)" (KJV)

The lamb is the resurrected Christ. Although the lamb had been slain (Revelation 5:6) it now stands on Mount Zion. Jesus defeated death at the cross:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2: 14-15)" (KJV)

What is Mount Zion? It is the place from which salvation comes; and, it is the place from which the Saviour comes:

"Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad. (Psalm 14: 7)" (KJV)

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. (Romans 11: 26)" (KJV)

And, compare with:

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. (Psalm 2: 6)" (KJV)

This was done at the resurrection of Christ.

"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. (Acts 13: 32-37)" (KJV)

Psalm 2: 7 is applied to the resurrection of Christ.

“I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2: 7)” (KJV)

Who are the 144,000? The Church. We have already answered this question in our comments on Chapter 7. Remember that the number 12 symbolises the people of God (twelve patriarchs, twelve apostles, twelve tribes). The number $144,000 = 12 \times 12 \times 1000$ is God's way of emphasising that *all* of his people are under his care and protection. Additional results are given by the descriptions of the 144,000.

1. In Chapter 7, the 144,000 are sealed with the name of God and the Lamb. Revelation 3:12 says that those who conquer have the name of God and Christ written on them. Who are those who conquer? The Church!

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (Romans 8: 37)” (KJV)

2. Chapter 7 calls the 144,000 Israelites. Did he literally mean Jews? No, in Revelation 3:9 Jesus spoke of people who said they were Jews but were not. (They were physical Jews but not spiritual Jews.) Who are the spiritual Israelites at this time? The Church! Israel is an established name for God's people and that is how it is used here.
3. Chapter 14 says that the 144,000 are those that have been redeemed from the earth. The Church has been redeemed from the earth. See the following quotations:

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6: 20)” (KJV)

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. (I Corinthians 7: 23)” (KJV)

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (I Peter 1: 18-19)” (KJV)

Finally, Revelation 5:9-10 says that those Christ redeemed became a kingdom or priests and 1 Peter 2:9 describes the Church as a royal priesthood.

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast

redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5: 9-10)" (KJV)

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2: 9)" (KJV)

4. Chapter 14 describes the 144,000 as virgins and in 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul describes the Church as a "pure bride" presented to her one husband (Jesus Christ). See also Ephesians 5:21-33 where Paul describes the relationship between Christ and his Church as a marriage.

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11: 2)" (KJV)

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. (Ephesians 5: 21 – 33)" (KJV)

5. Chapter 14 tells us that only the 144,000 could learn the new song. This is the new song of redemption we saw in Chapter 5: 9-10. That *only* the 144,000 could learn this song tells us that the 144,000 include *all* of the redeemed. No one but the 144,000 could sing this song! The 144,000 is not just a part of the Church. The 144,000 is the Church.

6. Chapter 14 describes the 144,000 as those redeemed from mankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb. James 1:18 describes the Church as "a kind of first fruits of his creatures."
7. Chapter 14 describes the 144,000 as those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. In Luke 9:23-24 Jesus says "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it."
8. Chapter 14 describes the 144,000 as being spotless. Ephesians 5:27 describes the Church as being without spot or wrinkle.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5: 27)" (KJV)

Open for discussion:

However, do not the twenty-four elders portrayed here also represent the Church? Yes, but from a different perspective; the 144,000 represent the Church as those redeemed from mankind and the twenty-four elders represent the Church as a royal priesthood continuously serving God. Remember that Rome was represented by two distinct images in Chapter 13 to emphasise different perspectives.

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. (Revelation 4: 4)" (KJV)

The fall of Babylon foreseen

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14: 6-8)" (KJV)

This angel delivers a gospel - good news to those who follow God and a warning to those who are opposed. The righteous will be vindicated. The persecutors will be judged. The beast is unstoppable. Coming events will show that God alone is worthy of worship.

In Chapter 17 we will see that Babylon the Great portrays Rome as a harlot who is drunk with the blood of the Saints. Babylon was a well known persecutor of God's people and the reason for its comparison with Rome is immediate. Babylon has fallen:

The anxiousness of the verb emphasises the certainty of the event. In Genesis 17:5: "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."

At the time, Abraham had no children! The anxiousness stressed the certainty of the fulfilment. The "wine of her impure passion" is the blood of the Saints and Martyrs. The next angel will serve the harlot another drink - the unmixed wine of God's wrath.

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17: 6)" (KJV)

The punishment of the wicked

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Revelation 14: 9-12)" (KJV)

God's wrath is reserved for those who worship the beast. Their judgment is coming. Fire and brimstone (or sulfur) were literally used to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and since has become a symbol for other judgments of God. For example, similar language is used in Isaiah 34:8-17 to describe the judgment against Edom.

"For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and

the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein. (Isaiah 34: 8-17)" (KJV)

Was Edom literally destroyed by fire and brimstone as Sodom was? No. In Isaiah 34:9-10 we read that the land of Edom would burn endlessly yet in vv.13-15 we read that at the same time wild animals would live there. The language against Edom (and against Rome here) was figurative and was intended to recall the past judgments of God. Note that Hell is not being portrayed here. The context makes clear that this language is used to portray God's judgment of Rome and not his final judgment against the ungodly. (Similar language in other contexts is used to portray other judgments - the judgment against Edom and the final judgment to name two.) Further, the judgment portrayed here takes place "in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb" whereas in 2 Thessalonians 1: 9 - 12 we see that the punishment brought about by the final judgment will take place in "exclusion from the presence of the Lord."

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 1: 9-12)" (KJV)

Glance on Armageddon, the harvest.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. (Revelation 14: 13 – 16)” (KJV)

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. The "from now on" implies that they are blessed from that point on. (It does not imply that those who had previously died in the Lord were not blessed.) Jesus is portrayed as riding on a white cloud, wearing a crown of victory, and ready to reap the harvest. Isaiah 19:1 pictures God riding on a swift cloud to judge Egypt.

“The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. (Isaiah 19: 1)” (KJV)

Glance on Armageddon, the period

“And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. (Revelation 14: 17 – 20)” (KJV)

In this passage we see two angels; one who carries a sharp sickle and another who appears "out from the altar" and who "has power over fire." The first angel begins to "reap the earth" when the second angel gives him the go ahead. The altar from which the second angel emerges is the brazen altar of burnt offering from which the coals were taken for the incense offering. The judges of Israel marched from this altar in Ezekiel 9:1-2.

"He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. (Ezekiel 9: 1-2)" (KJV)

The gathering of the vintage is a classic figure for God's judgment of the wicked. He tramples them as one would trample grapes. The grapes are trodden "outside the city." The city could be Rome or it could be the city of God. Ezekiel 62:12-63:6 portrays God as trampling the wine press (against Edom) outside of the city alone. That is, the picture may be one of God leaving his city to trample the wicked who are outside. The blood portrays the severity of the judgment. 1600 stadium or furlongs is about 200 miles. Therefore, we have a river of blood which is 200 miles long and as deep as a horse's chest. Its intent is to frighten. The coming judgment will be terrifying. (This passage causes particular trouble for the literalists. A river of blood 200 miles long, a modest 100 feet wide, and 5 feet deep would contain 3,949,714,285 gallons; that is, enough blood to fill up over 3.5 billion people (at 4.5 quarts/person).) The apocryphal book of Enoch speaks of people who will be "smitten in one place ... until it streams with their blood like a river ... and the horses will walk up to their breast in the blood of sinners, and the chariots will be submerged to its height." To be taken literally ? No. Debriefing? Yes.

A quick review

1. Before the seals were opened we had a vision of Heaven which assured us that the true throne was in Heaven and not in Rome. (Chapters 4 and 5.)
2. Before the trumpets were sounded we were shown a period of silence in Heaven (a drum roll) and told that the coming judgment was based upon a call for justice by the saints. (Chapters 8 and 9.)
3. Chapter 15 is a third vision of Heaven and occurs before the bowls of God's wrath are poured out in Chapter 16.

Chapters 15 – 18

This section seems to deal particularly with the judgment on Babylon herself. The "preface of blessing" is set before us in chapter 15, where we have vision of the millennial glory and reign of Christ and His saints, as portrayed in the allusion to the sea of glass and what follows. The pouring out of the vials in chapter 16 represents the judgments preceding the realisation of this millennial reign. The battlefield, is thought, a literal battlefield between the Roman nations

with the Antichrist at their head. Christ, however, is seen as interposing on behalf of his people, the faithful remnant.

Chapter 17 gives us a picture of the fate of moral Babylon, or Babylonianism, the anti-Christian system which has made possible the Antichrist himself, and which is represented by the harlot sitting on the scarlet beast.

This woman, may symbolise the moral, political, commercial, and ecclesiastical systems. The seven heads may be seven systems forming a perfect whole, the sum and substance of Babylonianism in the last days. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms of the Roman federation which support the system. The seven kings may be the seven world-monarchies leading up to this last.

Five are fallen, those of Nimrod, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. One is the Roman (of John's own day). The 'other' was not yet come, namely, the constitutional monarchies of the present time. The 'eighth' is that of the Antichrist of which we are now speaking. The system is destroyed by the ten kings who give their power to the Antichrist for that purpose, having wearied of the restriction of their power which has been entailed on them by the harlot, or in other words, by Babylonianism.

Chapter 18 speaks for itself, and outlines the destruction of Babylon as a city, the material Babylon, the capitol city of Antichrist's dominion, as we will develop further in this careful study.

Chapters 15 - 16 The seven bowls

Chapter 15: 1 - 8	Preparation for the final plagues
Verse 1	The sign of the seven angels
Verses 2 - 4	The victorious martyrs
Verses 5 - 8	Attendees of God's wrath.

Chapter 16: 1 - 12 Bowls one to six

Chapter 15: 1 - 8	Preparation for the final plagues
Verse 1	The sign of the seven angels
Verses 2 - 4	The victorious martyrs
Verses 5 - 8	Ministers of God's anger

Chapter 16: 1 - 2	Bowls one to six
Verses 1 - 3	Bowls one and two
Verses 4 - 9	Bowls three and four
Verses 10 - 11	Bowl five
Verse 12	Bowl six

Chapter 16: 13 - 16 **Is the third deviation to the subject**

Chapter 16: 13 - 16 **The three frogs**

Verses 13-14, and 16
Verse 15 Satanic trinity and Armageddon
Word of warning to the remnants.

Chapter 16: 17 - 21 **The seventh bowl**

Verses 17-18 The consummation of judicial anger
Verses 19 - 21 The results of God's anger

Chapters 17 - 18 **Judgment of Babylon**

Chapter 17: 1 - 6 **The vision of the harlot, ecclesiastical Babylon**

Verses 1 – 5 The vision of the harlot, ecclesiastical Babylon
Verse 6 The woman and her crimes

Chapter 17: 7 - 18 **The harlot and her doom**

Verses 7 - 14 The instrument of her doom
Verses 15 - 18 The account of her doom

Chapter 18: 1 - 24 **Judgment of commercial Babylon**

Verses 1 - 8 Her destruction announced
Verses 20 - 24 Her destruction is effected

Chapter 15 – Preparation for the final plagues

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. (Revelation 15: 1)” (KJV)

The judgments we have seen so far, have been partial judgments which allow for repentance. The judgments contained in the seven bowls are different. The judgment of the bowls is total and final and repentance does not appear to be an option. We have seven angels with seven plagues indicating that this judgment is complete and permanent. We are also told that with these judgments, the wrath of God is ended. This is God's final word with reverence to Rome, the enemy of God about which this book has been revolving. However, does not this language (the wrath of God is ended) imply that the final judgment and the end of the world are likely to be in process? This is the question! Firstly, remember yet again the time frame of the book; it contains things which were to come shortly to pass. Secondly, to apply this passage to the end of the world would require one to completely ignore the context of the passage; the first fourteen

chapters contain no reference to that event (as there is a need for caution). Thirdly, the same language is used in the Old Testament to refer to events unrelated to the end of the world. For example, in Ezekiel 7:2 - 6 we read:

“Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the LORD. Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an only evil, behold, is come. An end is come, the end is come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come. (Ezekiel 7: 2 – 6)” (KJV)

The above quotations regard a judgment against Israel. The same language is used in Revelation with regard to a judgment against Rome. Although similar language could be used to describe the final judgment, to do so here would violate the context and time frame of the passage. In addition, similar language was used in Ezekiel to describe a specific judgment against a specific enemy which is exactly the same context we have here.

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. (Revelation 15: 2)” (KJV)

A sea of glass mingled with fire: This is the sea before the throne which we also saw in Revelation 4: 6. Remember that the sea stresses the separation between God and his creation; that is it stresses the holiness of God. In Solomon's temple a sea stood between the priest and the holy place where God dwelt:

“Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. And under it was the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. And the thickness of it was an handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths. He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for

the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in. (2 Chronicles 4: 2 – 6)” (KJV)

(Note: A separating sea also had a special meaning to the author John as at the time of his vision he was in exile on the Isle of Patmos separated from freedom by a sea.)

Further, this sea provides yet another parallel between Rome and Egypt. In the book of Exodus 15 we see that the Red Sea stood between the Israelites and freedom and it was through that sea that God manifested his holiness. The people in question were standing on (not beside) the sea of glass. This would then seem to indicate that the saints have moved closer to the throne through their suffering. Philippians 3:10 reminds us that we become like Christ by sharing in his suffering and Hebrews 4:16 tells us that we should with confidence (boldly) draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. (Philippians 3: 10)” (KJV)

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4: 16)” (KJV)

Who are those that conquered the beast? Those who remained faithful to God in spite of persecution, temptation, and trials. Those who had conquered included both those faithful who remained alive and those faithful who had been martyred.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (Revelation 15: 3 – 4)” (KJV)

The song of Moses in Exodus 15 portrays a great victory of God over an enemy of his people, which was Egypt. The song of the Lamb portrays the same thing with regard to Rome. The difference is that the deliverance from Egypt was a physical deliverance and the deliverance from Rome is a spiritual deliverance. Moses could do nothing for a dead Israelite yet in Revelation we read that in the Lamb the dead are blessed. Who shall not fear and glorify thy name? This is not a promise of worldwide conversion as some would suggest. We have seen

similar language before in this book. One may know of God's power and in fact may even glorify him without accepting him as Lord. Two examples from the Old Testament may be found in the Book of Daniel:

1. After seeing Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego delivered from the fiery furnace Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel 3:29:

“Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. (Daniel 3: 29)” (KJV)

Did he fear God? Yes. Did he glorify God? Yes. Did he accept God as his own? No. He explicitly referred to God as the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (and not his God).

2. After seeing Daniel brought up alive from the den of lions King Darius said in Daniel 6:26-27.

“I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. (Daniel 6: 26-27)” (KJV)

Did he fear God? Yes. Did he glorify God? Yes. Did he accept God as his own? No. Why did he glorify God? He saw signs and wonders. A third example may be found in Revelation 5:13 where we find men on earth glorifying God even though at the time God's people were portrayed as being in Heaven before the throne.

“Then was Daniel brought in before the king. And the king spake and said unto Daniel, Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? (Revelation 5: 13)” (KJV)

Verse 5 and 6:

“And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and

having their breasts girded with golden girdles. (Revelation 15: 5-6)" (KJV).

In the Old Testament, the tent of witness (or better, the tent of testimony) held the ark of the covenant in the inner sanctuary of the temple. Only the high priest could enter the inner sanctuary where God dwelt and then only once a year with the blood of an innocent victim to be sprinkled. The priest would carry a censer of incense which billowed smoke to ensure that he did not see God. The seven angels with the seven plagues come out of this inner sanctuary. That is, the judgment which they are bringing is coming directly from God. The coming judgment is a divine judgment brought about by the prayers of God's people.

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (Revelation 6: 10)" (KJV)

This is further emphasised by the fact that these angels are portrayed in priestly clothing - bright linen and golden girdles. Remember that a girdle was worn by a priest only when he was officiating on behalf of the people. These angels dressed as priests come directly from the presence of God to wage a **holy war** against Rome.

Verses 7 and 8.

"And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. (Revelation 15: 7-8)" (KJV)

Remember our study earlier regarding the four living creatures around the throne of God. They are the cherubim who protect God's reputation and demand the punishment of the ungodly.

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. (Revelation 4: 6 – 8)" (KJV)

The smoke in the temple may portray that which came from the censer the priest carried. It also indicates the solemnity of the occasion and the glory and power of God. In 1 Kings 8:10-11 a cloud of smoke fills the house of the Lord as an indication that the glory of the Lord fills the house of the Lord.

"And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. (1 Kings 8: 10 -11)" (KJV)

At the dedication of the temple the priests could not enter the house of God because of a cloud of smoke, just as in Leviticus 16:2.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. (Leviticus 16: 2)" (KJV)

The message from the Old Testament was that no one could look upon the glory of God and live. No one could enter the holy place when God came down "in the cloud upon the mercy seat." The more, God told Moses:

"And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. (Exodus 33: 20)" (KJV)

How is this related to God's judgment of Rome?

1. God's judgment against Rome is described as "a coming of the Lord."

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (Revelation 1: 7)" (KJV)

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22: 20) (KJV)

Matthew 24: 30, describes God's judgment against Jerusalem.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24: 30)" (KJV)

2. God's judgment against Rome was a manifestation of his glory.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. (Revelation 11: 15 – 19)” (KJV)

The judgment against Rome is a divine judgment. There are many, many theories as to why Rome fell. Gamaliel Milner in his book *The Problem of Decadence* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1931, p. 198) provides a survey of many of the best known theories including vice, Christianity, despotism, bureaucracy, taxation, the dole, slavery, the birth rate, race, soil, climate, the military, and pacifism. In the end, he pins the fall on destiny:

The general impression that we receive from the story of Rome's fall is that vast cosmic forces were at work which frustrated the counsels of the wisest statesmen, and rendered the skill and valour of the greatest generals, ... if ever in human history we can discern the working of destiny or inevitable fate, it is here.

He was correct that the fall of Rome was inevitable but he missed the mark as to the cause. Rome did not fall because of fate or some unknown vast cosmic force. Revelation makes it very clear that the "vast cosmic force" which destroyed Rome was God. Remember Revelation 10: 5 - 7.

“And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. (Revelation 10: 5 – 7)” (KJV)

In the New Testament the term "mystery" is used to describe something which was formerly not understood but which has now been revealed. In the Book of

Revelation the conflict between Rome and the Church is called a mystery; that is, the outcome of this conflict was formerly misunderstood but has now been revealed.

Chapter 10 indicates that this outcome would occur in the days of the seventh trumpet. Therefore, as the seventh seal contained the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet contains the seven bowls of God's wrath which were poured out on Rome.

Revelation chapter 16 describes these seven bowls which are intended to portray a total and complete judgment against Rome. The judgment of the trumpets was partial and allowed for repentance. The judgment of the bowls is final and complete - no repentance is allowed. The trumpets were intended to warn; the bowls are intended to recompense. And, this brings us to chapter 16, the bowls one to six.

Chapter 16

First Bowl (vial)

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. (Revelation 16: 1 – 2)”
(KJV)

Like we saw in Revelation chapter 15, the seven angels came out from the temple dressed in priestly garments. This indicated that their mission was of divine origin; that is, the judgment of Rome was a divine judgment from God. Since Revelation 15:8 indicates that no one could enter the temple until the judgment had ended, the voice in Revelation 16:1 is in all probability the voice of God. The seven bowls were foreshadowed in Revelation 14:9-10.

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. (Revelation chapter 14: 9-10)

The first bowl contains the first portion of this wrath. In particular, it contains painful wounds which afflict those who worship the image of the beast. Remember our earlier comments regarding the identity of this beast and its

followers. This bowl parallels the sixth plague against Egypt, a previous judgment of God against another persecutor of his people.

“And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. (Exodus 9: 11)” (KJV)

Were the Romans literally afflicted with these wounds? No. Like everything else we have seen in this vision these bowls are symbolic. If the wounds in verse 2 are literal then what about the seven headed beast in verse 2? Is it literal, also? If they are not literal then what is their purpose? What do these bowls portray? Remember once again, Revelation 14:9-10; these bowls portray the wrath of God and the judgment of Rome. How does God describe this judgment? He uses symbols which remind us of his past judgments.

Second bowl (vial)

“And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. (Revelation 16: 3)” (KJV)

The second bowl turns the sea into blood. Again we are reminded of a past display of God's wrath against Egypt. Is this literal? Did all of the creatures in the sea literally die? No. Similar language was used in the Old Testament. Compare the description given in Zephaniah 1:2 - 4 of a judgment against Judah.

“I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD. I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarims with the priests. (Zephaniah 1: 2 – 4)” (KJV)

Did this literally occur? Compare the description given in Jeremiah 4:23 - 28 of another judgment against Judah.

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a

full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it. (Jeremiah 4: 23 – 28)” (KJV)

Did this literally occur? Compare the description given in Isaiah 13: 19 - 22 regarding the fall of Babylon.

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged. (Isaiah 13: 19 – 22)” (KJV)

Did this literally occur? Once again, ‘No’. History tells us that Babylon fell without a shot. The priests opened the gates and let Cyrus in after Belshazzar was assassinated. Note that Isaiah said that Babylon would fall as Sodom fell, that no one would ever live there again, and that no one would ever pass through it again. None of this was literally fulfilled. Alexander the Great headquartered there and later died there. People live there today. What then is meant by this language? Babylon, the kingdom, will fall never to rise again. The language is designed to instil terror and describe the wrath and judgment of God against the ungodly. The language paints a picture. Finally, compare the judgment against Edom detailed in Isaiah 34:9-13.

“And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. (Isaiah 34: 9 – 13)” (KJV)

Did this literally occur? Could it have literally occurred? (Could an ostrich live in burning pitch?) The prophecies in Revelation are modelled after those in the Old Testament. Those in the Old Testament often used vivid imagery and hyperbole that did not literally occur but were intended to paint a picture in the reader's mind. Similar language in Revelation is used for a similar purpose. One cannot properly interpret Revelation without studying the Old Testament.

Third bowl (vial)

“And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. (Revelation 16: 4 – 7)” (KJV)

The second bowl turned the sea into blood. This bowl turns the fresh water into blood. Again, we are reminded of God's wrath against Egypt. (The first plague in Exodus 7:14 - 24 turned the Nile into blood.) God's wrath against Rome will exceed his wrath against Egypt. Here he turns all of the water into blood. Again, is this literal? No. See our comments above regarding the second bowl. Does anyone teach that these passages should be taken literally? Yes, some unfortunately do.

In verse 7, the altar cries out to declare the justice of God. Remember Revelation 6:9-10.

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (Revelation 6: 9 – 10)” (KJV)

The cry for justice which prompted this display of God's wrath came from the martyrs gathered under the altar and they voice their approval in Revelation 16: 7. Read verse 7 well, and think of heavenly fantasy leaders.

Fourth bowl (vial)

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these

plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. (Revelation 16: 8 – 9)." (KJV)

The fourth bowl causes the heat of the sun to intensify and scorch men with fire. Remember in early Christian history, that Nero had used the burning bodies of Christians. Tacitus wrote that: "(Christians) were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and, when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night."

The Romans wanted light and God gives it to them by turning up the heat of the sun. Also, remember the description of God's people given in Revelation 7:16-17.

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Revelation 7: 16 – 17)" (KJV)

The condition of the ungodly is portrayed as being opposite that of the godly. Those afflicted by this bowl curse God who has power over these plagues and they do not repent. Again we are told that this is a divine judgment; these plagues are from God just as the plagues against Egypt were. The response of those afflicted also parallels that of the Egyptians; that is, they do not repent.

Fifth bowl (vial)

"And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. (Revelation 16: 10 – 11)" (KJV)

The fifth bowl pours darkness on the throne of the beast and its kingdom. This plague parallels the ninth plague against Egypt. Remember Exodus 10:21.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. (Exodus 10: 21)" (KJV)

The darkness here can also be "felt"; it causes men to bite their tongues in anguish. This bowl may portray the moral darkness as in Chapter 9 where smoke from the bottomless pit darkened the sun and sky. There spiritual and moral blindness was portrayed as a punishment from God. Compare 2 Thessalonians. 2:11 - 12 where God sent people "a strong delusion to make them believe what

is false" and in Matthew 11:25 Jesus thanked God that he had hidden certain things from the wise and understanding.

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thessalonians 2: 11 – 12)" (KJV)

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (Matthew 11: 25)" (KJV)

Let us think, that Rome fell because it did not have a sufficient inner base. The lowering of moral standards and the resulting decadence contributed directly to the fall of Rome. Moral and spiritual blindness is a disease which destroys the heart of a person or a nation. This bowl afflicts Rome with this disease.

Sixth bowl (vial)

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (Revelation 16: 12)" (KJV)

The sixth bowl causes the water in the great river Euphrates to dry up to prepare the way for kings from the east. (If these bowls are describing literal plagues then where did this water come from?) Remember that the sixth trumpet also portrayed warfare as an instrument of God's judgment. There we saw two-hundred million troops cross the Euphrates river to march against Rome. (See Revelation 9:13-19.) The war of the sixth trumpet was only a partial judgment - only a third were killed. How much worse must the war of the sixth *bowl* be - it will be a total and complete judgment. Remember Revelation chapter 9 that "Crossing the Euphrates" is a vibrant picture taken from the Old Testament to represent the threat of military power. The Assyrians and Babylonians crossed the Euphrates river to attack the Jews. Compare Isaiah 8:7-8 where the great river Euphrates is used to portray military might:

"Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. (Isaiah 8: 7-8)" (KJV)

The drying up of the waters is a common sign of the power of God. In Exodus 14 God showed his power by drying up the Red Sea. In Joshua 3 God showed

his power by drying up the Jordan River. In Jeremiah 51:36 God threatens to destroy Babylon by drying up her sea. In Zechariah 10:11 God threatens to destroy Egypt by drying up the Nile. Now in Revelation 16 we see God drying up the Euphrates river to allow his armies to advance upon Rome even more easily than they did in Revelation chapter 9. In Revelation, Babylon (a past enemy of God's people) is used to portray Rome (a current enemy of God's people). When Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon he did so by drying up the Euphrates River which flowed right through the centre of Babylon. Cyrus diverted the river into a lake and entered the city through the dry channel of the river. Just as the actual city of Babylon had fallen by a literal drying up of the Euphrates, the figurative Babylon (Rome) would fall by a figurative drying up of the Euphrates.

Who are, in fact, the kings from the East?

1. Some say that these are the allies of Rome who are portrayed as rushing in to her aid. This however conflicts with the parallel passage of the sixth trumpet in Revelation chapter 9 where the armies which cross the Euphrates do so to attack Rome. Additionally, the passage here indicates that God dries up the river to help the invading kings from the east. They are on His side.
2. In Chapter 9 a huge army of two-hundred million horsemen crossed the Euphrates to attack Rome. The purpose of such a huge number of troops was clearly to inflict terror. (Remember how the horses were described in Chapter 9.)

Did this literally occur? No. None of the previous bowls literally occurred and this bowl is no different. The purpose of the bowls is to draw a picture of complete and total destruction and judgment and that is exactly the picture which this bowl conveys.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Revelation 16: 13-14)” (KJV)

Who is assembled against the advancing armies of God? The dragon (Satan - the power behind Rome), the beast (the beast from the sea - the civil, military might of Rome), and the false prophet (the beast from the earth - the false religious side of Rome).

These three form a revolting contrast to the Godhead - the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From the mouth of each emerges a foul demonic spirit like a frog. These spirits perform signs and assemble the whole world for battle. This section may parallels 1 Kings 22:19-23 where we see lying spirits receive permission from God to deceive Ahab into battle against Ramoth-Gilead. Why are they compared to frogs?

1. Frogs are connected to the plagues is read in the Book of exodus. Psalm 78:45 says that God sent frogs to destroy the Egyptians and Psalm 105:30 says that their land swarmed with frogs even in the chambers of their kings.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in the river only? And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only. (Exodus 8: 5-11)” (KJV)

“He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them. (Psalm 78: 45)” (KJV)

“Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. (Psalm 105: 30)” (KJV)

2. Frogs are famous for their empty and continuous croaking. The sound of a frog is a symbol for meaningless speech which characterized the speech of the dragon and the two beasts.
3. In Zoroastrianism, the Persian religion, frogs are the bringer of plagues and an agent of the power of darkness. Hence, this symbol may have been attached to the symbol of the Kings from the East.

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Revelation 16: 15)” (KJV)

Jesus is coming like a thief. To what does this refer? Similar language is used in Matthew 24:43-44 to describe the final coming of Jesus but to apply that to this passage would require us to ignore the time frame of this book and the context of this passage.

“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 24: 43-44)” (KJV)

Similar language is often used to describe different events; however, this Christ’s words spoken during his earthly ministry. Whatever this coming is, it will be exactly ‘unexpected’ as would the coming of a thief. Only those who watch and are ready will be spared. What is the context of verse 15? The verse is inserted in a passage describing a great judgment against Rome which Revelation 1:1- 3; 22:6; 22:10 tells us would occur shortly after the book was written.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 1: 1-3)” (KJV)

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. (Revelation 22: 6)” (KJV)

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22: 20)” (KJV)

The book ends in 22:20 with Jesus saying that " Surely I come quickly." Does it describe the final coming of Jesus? The time frame of the book says ‘no’. The context of the book says ‘no’. Similar language is used elsewhere in the New Testament to describe another past event. Remember again Matthew 24:30, 34.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24: 30)” (KJV)

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Matthew 24: 34)” (KJV)

Also, compare Matthew 16:28:

“Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. (Matthew 16: 28)” (KJV)

Matthew 24:30-34 describes the judgment of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as a coming of Christ.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Matthew 24: 30-34)” (KJV)

Revelation describes the judgment of Rome as a ‘coming of Christ’. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the final judgment of the world is described as a ‘coming of Christ’. "The second coming" occurs in countless commentaries **about** the Bible, but is found nowhere **in** the Bible. For instance, Hebrews 9:28 does refer to Christ's second "appearance."

“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Hebrews 9: 28)” (KJV)

As we have seen, however, passages such as Matthew 24:30-34, referred to above indicate that Jesus has already figuratively appeared again and has figuratively come again in judgment since his ascension. To be precise, the "second coming" of Christ should instead be referred to as the "second literal appearance" of Christ which will occur as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 -18.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are

asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4: 15 – 18)” (KJV)

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Revelation 16: 16)” (KJV)

Armageddon, the Hebrew place where the kings of the earth and of the whole world will be gathered together to make war against de Lord Jesus in the great day of the Almighty God. There seems to be an allusion to the great battlefield of Palestine in the Esdraelon, and to the Megiddo mentioned in Judges 5: 19.

“The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. (Judges 5: 19)” (KJV)

“Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam. (1 Kings 4: 12)” (KJV)

“In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead. (2 Kings 23: 29 - 30)” (KJV)

The word itself is translated ‘the mountain of slaughter,’ and may be used symbolically for the destruction that will surely fall upon the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God chose a famous battlefield to portray the complete judgment and utter destruction of Rome. However, can it be taken literally? No. A vivid image? Definitely. Armageddon is the perfect setting for the figurative battle between the Lamb and the dragon. Napoleon once remarked that all of the armies of the world could make battle there.

Seventh bowl (vial)

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. (Revelation 16: 17)” (KJV)

This is the culmination of the judgment of Rome. At this point Rome's fate was sealed and its fall became inevitable. The verdicts of historians notwithstanding, the book of Revelation makes it clear that Rome fell because they persecuted Christians. Rome's fall was a divine judgment from God. The most powerful empire the earth had ever seen went up against the Church and lost. With the seventh bowl, God declares that "It is accomplished!"; his judgment is complete.

Does this then speak of the actual end of Rome (usually placed around A.D. 476)? Not necessarily. Rome's fate was certain long before it actually fell. As a comparison, note that Christ defeated death at the cross yet death still occurs.

Death was conquered at the cross:

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. (2 Timothy 1: 8-10)” (KJV)

Jesus "**abolished death** and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Hebrews 2:14 says:

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2: 14)” (KJV)

Yet death will continue to exist until the end of the world:

1. 1 Corinthians 15:24-26:

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all

authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15: 24-26)

2. 1 Corinthians 15:54:

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15: 54) (KJV)

Death's fate was sealed at Calvary's cross yet it continued to operate. Similarly, Rome's fate was sealed during John's day yet it continued to operate for awhile even though it had been judged and sentenced by God. Note that this bowl is poured into the air. The fall of Rome was a great defeat for Satan. He had tried to kill Jesus in his infancy through Herod (and indirectly through Rome) and had failed. He then tried to kill the Church in its infancy directly through Rome and had failed again. Satan was the power behind Rome and complete defeat *with regard to Rome* is described in detail in Chapter 20.

Remember Ephesians 2:2:

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2: 2)" (KJV)

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great. (Revelation 16: 18 – 21)" (KJV)

As usual, a great judgment of God is portrayed as being accompanied by lightning, thunder, and earthquakes. The purpose is dramatic effect and we have seen it many times before. This earthquake was "such as had never been since men were on the earth." This indicates that this judgment is different from the previous judgments we have seen in this book. The judgment of the seventh bowl is God's final word with regard to Rome. This judgment is total and complete. Does not such language imply that this bowl must correspond to the

final judgment at the end of the world? No. Similar language is used elsewhere to describe other past judgments. Compare the following passage from Ezekiel which describes a judgment against Judah at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar:

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. (Ezekiel 5: 8 – 9)” (KJV)

Also, compare the following description of God's judgment against Jerusalem which occurred in A.D. 70:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (Matthew 24: 21)” (KJV)

The great city which is split into three pieces by the earthquake is Rome. The cities of the nations which fall with her may be her allies; that is, the client kings and federates which we first saw in Chapter 13. The division of the city into three pieces further emphasises the totality and completeness of this judgment. In Ezekiel 5, God speaks of the complete destruction of his people by dividing them into three pieces. See:

Ezekiel 5:2

“Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. (Ezekiel 5: 2)” (KJV)

Ezekiel 5:12

"A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them. (Ezekiel 5: 12)" (KJV)

The islands flee and the mountains cannot be found. Huge hundred pound hailstones fall from heaven. This language also commonly accompanies judgments in the Old Testament. See:

Micah 1: 3 - 4

"For, behold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. (Micah 1: 3 – 4)" (KJV)

Nahum 1:5

"The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. (Nahum 1: 5)" (KJV)

Psalm 97: 4 – 5

"His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. (Psalm 97: 4 – 5)" (KJV)

Ezekiel 26:18

Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. (Ezekiel 26: 18)" (KJV)

Psalm. 18: 7 - 15

"Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. (Psalm 18: 7 – 15)" (KJV)

With the seventh bowl God's judgment against Rome and her allies is completed. The fall of the city will be explained in more detail in Revelation

chapters 17 and 18. The battle at Armageddon will be illustrated in more detail in Revelation chapter 19. The defeat of Satan will be portrayed in more detail in Revelation chapter 20.

Chapters 17 and 18 – Judgment of Babylon

Chapter 17: 1 - 6

Verses 1 – 5

Verse 6

The vision of the harlot, ecclesiastical Babylon

The vision of the harlot, ecclesiastical Babylon

The woman and her crimes

Chapter 17: 7 - 18

Verses 7 - 14

Verses 15 - 18

The harlot and her doom

The instrument of her doom

The account of her doom

Revelation chapters 17 and 18 are an obituary for the great city Babylon; that is, for Rome. (If any doubt remains as to the identity of Babylon, the description in this chapter should leave no doubt that it portrays Rome.) Babylon was said to have fallen in Revelation Chapter 14 and was portrayed as being broken into three pieces in Revelation chapter 16. Revelation chapters 17 and 18 provide the details of that fall. Remember that we discussed Chapter 17 at length when we studied Revelation chapter 13 since Revelation 17:7-18 provides an explanation of many of the symbols found in chapter 13. It is important to note that Revelation 17:7-18 is not part of the vision but is instead a commentary on the vision in which an angel tells John the meaning of some of the symbols he saw.

“And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are

peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17: 7-18)" (KJV)

A main character in this chapter is a great harlot named Babylon the Great. Chapters 17 and 18 provide the following description of this harlot. Do they sound familiar?

1. She is powerful: She is seated upon many waters. She rides a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns.

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. (Revelation 17: 1 – 3)" (KJV)

2. She is successful: She is arrayed in purple and scarlet. She is bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls. She holds a golden cup.

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. (Revelation 17: 4)" (KJV)

3. She is arrogant and proud: Babylon the Great is written on her forehead.

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Revelation 17: 5)" (KJV)

4. She sits on seven hills.

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. (Revelation 17: 9)" (KJV)

5. She rules the world in John's day.

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17: 15-18)” (KJV)

To be compared with:

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (Luke 2: 1)” (KJV)

6. She is a terrible persecutor of God's people.

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17: 6)” (KJV)

“And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (Revelation 18: 24)” (KJV)

7. She is the leading commercial power on earth.

“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (Revelation 18: 3)” (KJV)

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and

goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. (Revelation 18: 11-19)" (KJV)

8. She is supported by a great military force.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. (Revelation 17: 3)" (KJV)

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. (Revelation 17: 7)" (KJV)

Compare with Revelation chapter 13

9. She is destroyed by her own military power and inner strife.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. (Revelation 17: 16-17)"

At the time this book was written, Rome was the only nation which fit each of these descriptions. A coin minted during the reign of Vespasian has been found which represents the city of Rome as a woman seated on its seven hills: Palatine, Capitoline, Esquiline, Aventine, Quirinal, Caelian, and Viminal. John uses *the same image* (which certainly would have been familiar to his readers) to describe Rome as a blood thirsty harlot (drunk on the blood of Christians) sitting upon seven mountains.

Note: Many commentators say that Babylon portrays Jerusalem. Would a first century reader have thought that Babylon meant Jerusalem when in his pocket he had a coin which portrayed Rome as a woman seated upon seven mountains? Clearly, no. **To understand Revelation, we must strive to see it from a first century perspective.**

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Revelation 17: 1-2)” (KJV)

She sits on many waters? Revelation 17:15 tells us that these waters are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. (Revelation 17: 15)” (KJV)

Rome was the city that ruled the world during John's day. Did Rome *literally* rule the entire world? No, but her dominion was so large that it was a common exaggeration. Luke 2:1 says that "a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that **all the world** should be enrolled."

Kings have committed fornication? Fornication in this context means that these kingdoms have made alliances with Rome. In the Old Testament the term most often portrays alliances which involve idolatry. When Israel went after strange gods, she was often described as a harlot. Israel was a theocracy and so her fornication referred to religious apostasy; she was called an adulteress because she had left God to go after another.

The harlot in this chapter is not called an adulteress; her fornication did not represent a departure from God. Are there any examples of this in the Old Testament? Yes. Isaiah 23:17 says that Tyre played the harlot with all of the kings of the earth.

“And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. (Isaiah 23: 17)” (KJV)

Nahum 3:4 says that Nineveh betrayed nations with her harlotries. Their fornications, like that of Rome, involved their treacherous and deceitful relationships with other nations.

“Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. (Nahum 3: 4)”

Revelation 17: 3-6 again:

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (Revelation 17: 3-6)” (KJV)

Remember Revelation chapter 12 in which the people of God were portrayed as a woman chased into the wilderness by an angry dragon. The woman which John sees in Chapter 17 is also portrayed as being in the wilderness but as we will see she is quite different from the woman of Revelation chapter 12. She sits upon a scarlet beast which is full of blasphemous names and which has seven heads and ten horns.

This beast is the beast from the sea which represented Rome as a civil power. The seven heads and ten horns were explained in Revelation chapter 13 and will be discussed again in the comments below concerning Revelation 17:9-12.

The harlot is dressed in purple and scarlet and arrayed with gold, jewels, and pearls. This denotes her richness and royalty. Rome was powerful in earthly terms. Rome was royal in earthly terms. Rome was rich in earthly terms. Rome was beautiful in earthly terms. Revelation says that, from God's point of view, the Church (which is an exact opposite of Rome) is powerful, royal, rich, and beautiful. She offers a golden cup to other nations. Compare the description of the actual Babylon found in Jeremiah 51:7.

“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. (Jeremiah 51: 7)” (KJV)

The nations which shared Rome's wealth also shared her guilt. She wears on her forehead the name "Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations." She wears this title proudly just as the High Priest wore the name of Jehovah upon his forehead. In Rome the prostitutes in the public hotels wore upon their foreheads a frontlet giving their names. Rome was proud of its abominations and fornications and made no attempt to hide it. She is vividly portrayed as being drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs. She is not just a persecutor. She pleases herself in slaughtering and she has revelled in that slaughter as a drunken man revels in wine. The next sections contains an explanation of many of the symbols which John has described. This section is not part of the vision really but is an interpretation of the vision. Our explanations of these verses will be briefly reviewed below.

The mystery of the harlot and the beast explained

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: **and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.** And the angel said unto me, **Wherefore didst thou marvel?** I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. (Revelation 17: 6-7)" (KJV)

The mystery of these symbols was something which was previously not understood but which will now be revealed. Throughout this explanation we should reverse the rule which we have been using throughout our study of this book; that is, we should accept the explanation as literal unless there is an overriding reason to treat it otherwise. This section does not describe something which John saw; it describes something which John was told about what he had seen.

Note: Many commentators have trouble with this section because the angel's interpretation does not match their own. Their response often involves 'figuration' all or part of the angel's interpretation. In fact, many treat the image as a literal description and the explanation of the image in this chapter as a figurative description!

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17: 8)" (KJV)

Remember our earlier comments regarding the bottomless pit and the book of life. The beast represents Rome as a civil, persecuting power. That "the beast

"was" would then represent that there had been persecution; that "the beast is not" would indicate that presently the persecution had subsided; and, that "the beast is to come" would indicate a resumption of the persecution. Does this fit Rome?

Yes. Nero was the first to actively persecute the Catholic Church. The persecution had subsided considerably when the book was written during Vespasian's rule. The persecution began again under Domitian's reign. Domitian was actually thought by some to be Nero resurrected. Suetonius says that Domitian was an object of terror and hatred to all and says that he "used to spend hours in seclusion every day, doing nothing but catch flies and stab them with a keenly-sharpened stylus." Domitian was the first to make Caesar worship compulsory. Juvenal said that Rome was enslaved to a "bald-headed Nero" and was, of course, then killed. Domitian renewed the persecution against Christians that Nero had started.

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (Revelation 17: 9-11)" (KJV)

The five kings who have fallen are Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius who followed Nero and ruled and died all within a span of about one year are ignored. The king "who is" is Vespasian. (The book was written this way during his reign.) The one who will come and reign only a short time is Titus who ruled for only two years. The eighth king is Domitian who began where Nero had left off with regard to persecuting the Church.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17: 12-18)" (KJV)

Remember again from Chapter 13 that the ten horns represent the client kings and federates of Rome. They have given their power to Rome but will receive authority at some critical point and will contribute to Rome's fall. The Visigoths were the first group to receive federate status from Rome and they sacked the city in A.D. 410.

The Lamb will overcome and conquer both Rome and her allies. We see here in fact that God will use Rome's allies as a weapon against her. Does Jesus' victory make him Lord of lords and King of kings? No. Jesus is victorious because he is already Lord of lords and King of kings. Nowhere in this book does Jesus *begin* to rule over something new. He has all authority when the book begins and he has all authority when the book ends. Those who overcome with Christ are those who "are called and chosen and faithful"; that is, the Church - not just martyrs but all who refused to submit to Rome.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18: 1 - 24 Judgment of commercial Babylon

Verses 1 - 8 Her destruction announced
Verses 20 - 24 Her destruction is effected

Judgment of Commercial Babylon – Her destruction announced

This chapter contains a form of prophetic literature, which is very common in the Old Testament. In particular, Chapter 18 is a "doom song" for the city of Rome. Compare with Isaiah 13:19-22 which is a doom song for Babylon, Isaiah 34:11-15 which is a doom song for Edom, and Zephaniah 2:13-15 which is a doom song for Nineveh. In each case, the ruin of a great city is foretold in vivid, poetic language interspersed with apocalyptic speech.

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged. (Isaiah 13: 19-22)" (KJV)

"But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof

to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. (Isaiah 34: 11-15)" (KJV)

"Ye Ethiopians also, ye shall be slain by my sword. And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! Every one that passeth by her shall hiss, and wag his hand. (Zephaniah 2: 13-15)" (KJV)

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. (Revelation 18: 1)" (KJV)

This passage is a reminder of Ezekiel 43:1-2 where we read that "the earth shone" with the glory of God.

"Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. (Ezekiel 43: 1-2)" (KJV)

This verse reconfirms that this song of doom and the judgment which it relays are from God. Babylon *has* fallen. So certain is the fall of Rome, that it is spoken of in the past tense. This was also the case in Revelation 14:8 where an angel said "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city." The city has become a dwelling place of demons. Isaiah 13:17-22 describes the destruction of historical Babylon by the Medes in the same terms.

"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of

kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged. (Isaiah 13: 17-22)" (KJV)

Why is the city described in this way? The most dramatic part of the portray is the demons haunting the ruins. The pagan gods banished from their reign unhappily haunt the ruins of the temples where once their power had been supreme."

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (Revelation 18: 3)" (KJV)

Rome was a great military and commercial power which enticed other nations to follow her wickedness. Rome was powerful and arrogant and openly boasted of her abominations. Compare the description given in Isaiah 10:12-14 of the "arrogant boasting" and "haughty pride" of the king of Assyria:

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. (Isaiah 10: 12-14)" (KJV)

Rome had the same attitude as the Assyrian king and ultimately suffered the same fate.

The call to come out of Babylon

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her

plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (Revelation 18: 4-5)" (KJV)

God calls for his people to come out of the city before they slip into Rome's evil ways and share in her destruction. This call is made many times in the Old Testament. God always wants his people to cut every connection with sin and to stand with him. God told Abraham in Genesis 12:1 to "Go from your country ... to the land I will show you." God told Lot in Genesis 19:12-14 "Up, get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy the city." God told Moses in Numbers 16:23-26 "Get away from about the dwelling of Korath, Dathan and Abiram ... Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men." Isaiah 48:20 says "Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea." Jeremiah 51:6 says "Flee from the midst of Babylon, let every man save his life." Was this a call for the people to *literally* leave the city?

The Christian is not conformed to the world but transformed from the world (Romans 12:2). It is not a question of retiring from the world; it is a question of living differently within the world.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12: 2)" (KJV)

"Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (Revelation 18: 6-8)" (KJV)

God commands that Rome be punished and that vengeance be exacted. This command is not however directed toward men; it is directed toward the angel who is acting on God's behalf as his instrument of justice. Vengeance does not belong to man, it belongs to God. God said in Deuteronomy 32:35 that "Vengeance is mine, and recompense."

"To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. (Deuteronomy 32: 35)" (KJV)

This passage teaches two lessons concerning the judgment of Rome.

Galatians 6:7 says:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (Galatians 6: 7)” (KJV)

A man sows what he reaps. Punishment always follows sin. Although Christians are forgiven and not punished for their sin, the punishment is still inflicted.

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53: 4-6)” (KJV)

For sure, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The first lesson we see here is that *punishment and sin always go together*. Sin has both eternal consequences and earthly consequences. Even Christians who are spared the eternal consequences may have to face earthly consequences. A forgiven convict must serve the remainder of his sentence. This passage parallels the command in Jeremiah 50:29 regarding Babylon:

“Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel. (Jeremiah 50: 29)” (KJV)

We also learn a second important lesson from Rome's fall:

All pride will one day be humiliated. Rome was judged more harshly because of her pride. She said "A queen I sit, I am no widow, mourning I shall never see." Rome was full of pride and thought she would never fall. Recall that pride is one of seven things which God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19). The pride which God hates is the arrogance of those who feel they have no need of God. God's punishment for pride in the Old Testament was to inflict extreme humiliation and that is what he promises Rome. She would plummet from her glory to her destruction

quickly and her destruction would be total and complete. Compare a similar pronouncements regarding Babylon:

“And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. (Isaiah 47: 7)” (KJV)

“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more. (Revelation 18: 9 -11)” (KJV)

Both Babylon and Rome were filled with pride and later had to eat their boastful words. Isaiah chapter 14 presents a vivid picture of the Babylonian king going into the underworld after his destruction to be greeted by other fallen nations. This passage implies that Rome would one day receive a similar greeting.

The lament of the world over Babylon

“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. (Revelation 18: 9-10)” (KJV)

Verses 9-19 contain three lamentations for Rome: a lamentation sung by kings (9-10), a lamentation sung by merchants (11-16), and a lamentation sung by shipmasters and sailors (17-19). These lamentation songs speak of the greatness, the wealth, and the luxury of Rome. Are such descriptions historically accurate? The Talmud says that of ten measures of wealth which came down into the world, Rome received nine and all the rest of the world only one. Aristides said that "if there is anything you cannot see at Rome, then it is a thing which does not exist and which never existed." Seutonius described Nero as follows: "He never wore the same garment twice. ... He fished with a golden net drawn by cords woven of purple and scarlet threads. It is said he never made a journey with less than a thousand carriages, with his mules shod with silver." Seutonius says that Caligula would "drink pearls of great price dissolved in vinegar, and set before his guests loaves and meats of gold." John said nothing of Rome that could be an exaggeration." These lamentation songs describe the greatness, the wealth, and the luxury of Rome. They have many points in common with the

lament over the city of Tyre found in Ezekiel 26 and 27. (*Please refer to your Bibles.*)

And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! (Revelation 18: 11-16)" (KJV)

These passages speak of the great commercial success of Rome. Verses 12-14 indicate the vast extent of her trade. These verses cause a lot of trouble for the "Babylon is Jerusalem" crowd but fit historical Rome perfectly. Verse 13 speaks of slaves. There were some sixty million slaves in the Roman empire. The merchants lament because of their loss of business. Their lament is not for Rome but for their own losses. They, like the kings, stand far off and watch the destruction. They do not attempt to help the great city. Again, compare the lament for Tyre in Ezekiel 27 and 28. (*Please refer to your Bibles.*)

"For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. (Revelation 18: 17-19)" (KJV)

The city is portrayed as being laid waste in one hour. Do remember our comments regarding the use of the phrase "one hour." In 8:1 and elsewhere it is used to indicate a time of critical importance and activity. (My hour has not yet come.) Nero's fire raged a week and failed to destroy the entire city yet the fire which God sends destroys the city in one hour. Rome's fall is total and complete and worse than anything she could imagine. Compare this lament of the shipmasters with the following passage from Ezekiel 27:28-30.

“The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes. (Ezekiel 27: 28-30)” (KJV)

At the sound of the cry of your pilots the countryside shakes, and down from their ships come all that handle the oar. The mariners and all the pilots of the sea stand on the shore and wail aloud over you, and cry bitterly. They cast dust on their heads and wallow in ashes.

Although Rome was not on the coast, the merchandise of the world entered at its port in Ostia. Again, the shipmasters lament over their loss of trade; their concern is for themselves, not for Rome. These men lament because their happiness was based upon the material things which came from their association with Rome.

Heaven's rejoicing over Babylon's fall - Her destruction is effected

“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. (Revelation 18: 20)” (KJV)

Rome's judgment is cause for rejoicing. God's people requested justice and God has delivered it. Again we find parallels in the Old Testament:

“Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 51: 48)” (KJV)

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (Revelation 18: 21-24)” (KJV)

A great millstone is thrown into the sea by a mighty angel to explain how the great city would be thrown down and found no more. A similar image is used in Jeremiah 51:63-64 to describe the fall of the literal city of Babylon:

"And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 51: 63-64)" (KJV)

Rome, like Babylon, would fall never to rise again. There would be no revived Roman empire. The sound of craftsmen practising their trade would never be heard again. The sound of rejoicing would never be heard again. No lights in the houses or in the streets would be seen again. The sounds of weddings would no longer be heard. Compare the following Old Testament descriptions:

1. **Jeremiah 25:10 (concerning Judah):** "Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle."
2. **Ezekiel 26:13 (concerning Tyre):** "And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard."

Ezekiel 24: 6 gives the reason for Rome's fall:

"Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall up on it. (Ezekiel 24: 6)" (KJV)

She like Tyre was a "bloody city."

Apocalyptic Millennial – Chapters 19: 1-20: 6.

Chapter 19	The Return of Christ
Chapter 19: 1 - 5 Verses 1 - 4 Verse 5	Rejoicing at Babylon's fall Heaven, the world unseen rejoices The throne of government speaks
Chapter 19: 6-10 Verses 6 - 8 Verses 9 - 10	The marriage of the Lamb The wedding The guests
Chapter 19: 11 - 16	Christ's second advent

Verses 11 - 14	The conqueror and his victorious army
Verses 15 - 16	The conqueror and His conquest

Chapter 19: 17-21

Verses 17 - 18	The great supper of God
Verses 19 - 21	The total destruction of Christ's foes.

Previously, about the apocalyptic Pre-millennial, the coming of Christ was referred to again and again, but was not particularly described. It was held in the fore view as the “preface of blessing” to each of the visions enumerated, but the visions represented judgments of different kinds to fall on the nations, and on Israel, for punitive and purifying purposes, prior to the realisation of the actual experience of his coming. Remember, however, that by the coming of Christ in this case is meant not His coming for His church which will have already taken place, but His coming with His church to inaugurate the millennial reign.

This view is called the Futurist because it holds, as we have seen, that the fulfilment of the visions is future, synchronising, indeed, with the close of an age, perhaps with the first half of the last seven years of that age. Refer to Daniel's last week of the seventy. The following is quite an inspiring passage from the book of Daniel, chapter 9.

“And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9: 22-27)” (KJV)

A rival to the Futurist school of interpretation is the historic that treats the chapters covered as a progressive sketch of the course of events in the world and in the church from the days of John to the end of this dispensation or age. In part, they have been already fulfilled. This school of interpretation generally holds the idea that Babylon means Rome, and that the Antichrist is the papacy, and is distinguished by what is called the year-day theory, i.e., the principle that the “days” spoken of in the book mean in each case a year.

The historic interpretation is quite fascinating, and holds the Bible student at first under the spell of its conclusions. However, the study of the Bible as a whole, or even such a limited study as that we have just pursued for information, convinces one that however the historic school may approximate or foreshadow the events of the coming end, the teachings of the Book of Revelation have reference to them. And, that is, the culminating events at the end, in a very special sense.

Introductive remark on Revelation chapter 19.

Revelation chapter 19 begins by showing God's people rejoicing (as they were told to do in chapter 18) over the fall of the great city and the victory of the Church. The great joy of those who overcame and conquered is compared here to the joy that accompanies a great wedding feast. The picture is one of victory and unrestrained joy. The battle of Armageddon, previewed in Chapter 16, is considered again in this chapter. The two beasts are defeated and cast into a lake of fire. The details of the battle are given after the Church rejoices over its victory; that is, the outcome of the battle is certain. Babylon has fallen. This chapter simply provides some of the details that were left out when the battle was first described.

Let us proceed at once with commenting Revelation chapter 19.

Revelation 19: 1-10, the representation of the actual coming of Christ.

“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him,

both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Revelation 19: 1-10)" (KJV)

A great multitude in heaven rejoice over the fall of the harlot. This great multitude represents all of God's people 'both living and dead'. Remember that the ungodly in the Book of Revelation are referred to as "those who dwell upon the earth" and that God's people are portrayed as dwelling in Heaven. Such a image does not just apply to martyrs but is true of all of God's people. The dichotomy between the godly and the ungodly is shown in this book by dividing mankind into a group that dwells on earth and a group that dwells in Heaven. God's judgments are true and just: God's greatness rests not just on his power but also on his character. His judgments are always true and just and this judgment is no exception. In judging Rome, God avenged the blood of his martyrs as they had requested him to do in Revelation 6:10 where they cried with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

Rome is portrayed as a city set on fire by God which burns forever. In Revelation 18:9-10 the kings of the earth stood far off and watched the city burn. The shipmasters in Revelation 18:18 also watched the great city burn. This is a common symbol for the judgment of God. Sodom and Gomorrah were literally destroyed by fire yet eventually the fire went out. Yet, Jude 7 says that Sodom and Gomorrah are presently undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (Jude 7)" (KJV)

They fell never to rise again and their fall serves as an eternal example. Edom is described in Isaiah 34 (*see your Bible*) as burning forever yet being inhabited by thistles and wild animals. Could that prophecy be taken literally? "Burning forever" is God's way of saying that the judgment of the city would serve as an example forever. Compare:

Jude 7:

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (Jude 7)"

Isaiah 66:24:

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

Rome provides an everlasting illustration of the power of God and his ability to deal with those who oppose his will and slaughter his people. In that sense, it burns forever and the smoke which rises from it is always visible.

For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns: God was the one king who was able to stop the military might of Rome. He reigns now as he has always reigned and will always reign. The fall of Rome was a public reaffirmation of his universal reign. God reigned prior to the fall of the Rome and he reigns after the fall of Rome. The marriage of the Lamb has come: A marriage and a marriage feast is used to portray the joy of God's people in Revelation chapter 19 just as the feast of the tabernacles was used to portray the joy of God's people in Revelation chapter 7. Marriage is a common figure in the Bible where it is used to portray many different things. In Matthew 25:1-13 and Luke 12:35-40 it portrays the need for watchfulness.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25: 1 – 13)" (KJV)

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. (Luke 12: 35-40)” (KJV)

In John 3:28-30 it is used to show that John the Baptist would decrease while Jesus increased.

“Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3: 28-30)” (KJV)

In Matthew 22:1-14 it is used to portray the rejection of the Jews. It is also used to describe the relationship between Christ and his Church in Ephesians; 2 Corinthians; and, Romans. Remember the apostle Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 11:2 :

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11: 2) (KJV)”

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the

marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22: 1 – 14)" (KJV)

A betrothal stage always preceded a Jewish marriage. During a betrothal, the man and woman could be called husband and wife but they could not be described as being "one flesh." Breaking a betrothal was considered a divorce. Remember Matthew 1:18-19:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily."

Why is this distinction important? Some of those who believe that Babylon portrays Jerusalem in this book teach that Jesus did not 'marry' the Church (to which he was betrothed) until A.D. 70 and that prior to that time he was still married to the harlot which they take to be Jerusalem. They say that the Church was betrothed to Christ but could not marry him until his former marriage (to Israel) was completely dissolved. His old marriage was ended, they say, in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. Is anything wrong with such a position? Aside from the fact that such a position has Jesus married to Israel and engaged to the Church at the same time, its proponents have apparently expunged Ephesians 5 and several related passages from their Bibles. Note, also, that Israel was called an adulteress (not a harlot) when she left God.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5: 29-32)" (KJV)

For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, **because we are members of his body.**

This mystery is a profound one, and it is obvious that it refers to Christ and the church.

Here the church is described as being "one flesh" with the Lord.

Christians are said to be members of his body and this membership is described as a marriage. Colossians 1:24 describes the Church as the body of Christ.

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. (Colossians 1: 24)" (KJV)

Christ and the Church are one body or one flesh and have been since the Church was established.

Romans 7:3-4:

"So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. (Romans 7: 3-4)" (KJV)

At our baptism, we die to the law of sin and death; that is, our marriage to our old way of life is dissolved. Romans 7:3 says that at that moment we are then free to remarry. By becoming a member of the Church - that is, a part of the Lord's body - we become married to Christ. There has never been a time during its existence when the Church was not married to Christ; that is, there has never been a time during its existence when the Church and Christ have not been one flesh or one body.

Well, then, what does verse 7 mean when it says that "the marriage of the Lamb has come"? **What is the context?** Chapter 19 is intended to portray the joy of God's people arising from their victory over Rome.

How is this joy portrayed ? By a great marriage and a great marriage feast.

Does this passage teach that Christ and the Church were not already 'married'? No. In fact, Revelation itself provides evidence to the contrary.

Ephesians 5:28-29 says:

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. (Ephesians 5: 28-29)” (KJV)

Christ and the Church are one flesh; that is, they are married. The theme of the Book of Revelation is that Jesus loves his Church and is intimately concerned with its welfare. The context of this passage is one of unrestrained joy and a marriage is used to symbolise that joy. For more evidence, read the next verse.

What is the main point of this symbol in Revelation 19: 9? The marriage itself or the joy which accompanies it? The angel says that those who are invited to the marriage supper are blessed - that is, ‘the guests are blessed’. Why? Because they are able to share the joy of the event.

In Revelation 19: 10, John falls down to worship the angel but is told that such worship is improper. (This happens again in Revelation 22:8.) This is God's way of telling his people that all of the praise and the glory for their deliverance should be directed to him. The angel has played a major role but he deserves no praise or glory. God alone deserves the praise and the glory for their victory. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Some hold that this testimony is our testimony about Christ and others hold that it is Jesus' testimony to us. A case can then be made that each is in a sense "the spirit of prophecy."

Revelation 19: 11-14, the representation of the church coming with him.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18)” (KJV)

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many

crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. (Revelation 19: 11-14)" (KJV)

Remember that the first seal in revelation 6:1-2 demonstrated a rider on a white horse who wore a crown and went out conquering and to conquer. Here again we see a rider on a white horse. This rider is called Faithful and True and his name is The Word of God, that is, this rider is Jesus Christ, the conqueror of Rome, the righteous judge.

Compare the description of Christ given in Revelation 1:12-16 with the description here.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. (Revelation 1: 12-16)" (KJV)

We are told in Revelation 19: 11-14, that he "he had a name written, that no man knew " yet in the next verse of same we read that " his name is called The Word of God." How can it be true that no one knows a name which is given in the next verse?

Names in the Bible are often used to denote a person's status. When one's status changed his name was often changed (Abram, Jacob, Saul). To have a name that no one else could know consequently implied that you had a status that no one else could share. This is certainly true of Jesus - only he can be called "The Word of God." The blood in which his robe is dipped is the blood of his enemies. The portray of Christ presented here is one of a warrior going out to conquer the enemies of his people. The ability of this warrior to conquer is emphasised by showing him drenched in the blood of those he has previously conquered. Although he rides with an army, we will later see that he does all of the work.

Again in verse 14, compare the description of Christ in Revelation chapter 1 with the description found here. The armies of heaven are the armies which are

allied with Christ. They are the ones who conquer with Christ. They are the ones who overcome Rome. They are not the armies of those who dwell on earth, they are the armies of Heaven. Who are the soldiers in these armies that stand with Christ? The Church. Who else? The Church is comprised of those who conquered and overcame. See the following passages:

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (Romans 8: 37)” (KJV)

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. (1 John 5: 4)” (KJV)

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. (Revelation 2: 7)” (KJV)

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. (Revelation 2: 26)” (KJV)

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. (Revelation 3: 5)” (KJV)

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3: 21)” (KJV)

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (Revelation 17: 14)” (KJV)

Who stood with Christ when he conquered Rome? Who was allied with him? Who overcame the Roman world through his power? **The Church.**

Revelation 19: 15-21, a further representation of the judgments on his enemies.

These judgments, according to the law of reappearance, are those previously referred to, only that now they are seen in a somewhat different connection or relationship.

“And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on

his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19: 15-21) (KJV)

The weapons of his warfare, “a sharp sword proceeding from his mouth”, with which he smites the nations, either in the threatenings of the written word, which now he is going to execute, or rather his word of command calling on his followers to take a just revenge on his and their enemies, who are now put in the wine-press of the wrath of, to be trodden under foot by him.

Did Jesus become King of Kings and Lord of Lords because he defeated Rome in this great battle? No. Here, and elsewhere, he is called King of Kings and Lord of Lords before the battle even begins. Remember, Jesus had all authority when this book started and he has all authority when it ends.

An angel invites the birds of the air to come and feast on the flesh of all who stand with the army arrayed against God. Does this angel have any doubts as to the outcome of this battle? No, and his message is that the Church should not have any doubts either. Remember that when this book was written the persecution against the Church was about to begin with renewed strength through Domitian. The purpose of this book was to assure the Church that their ultimate victory was certain and that, no matter how it seemed, Rome would be defeated. The message of this book is one of comfort and reassurance directed toward its first century readers. To properly interpret this book it is vital that we remember this context and look to the Old Testament to understand the symbols which are used. The same image found here is also found in Ezekiel 39:17-20 where it used for a similar purpose.

“And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice

for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 39: 17-20)" (KJV)

Who is arrayed against God? The beast and the kings of the earth. This beast is the beast from the sea which represents the military might of Rome. (Remember Revelation chapter 13.) The kings of the earth lead the armies of the earth which are composed of those who dwell upon the earth - that is, the enemies of God. They are in contrast to the armies of Heaven which are composed of those who dwell in Heaven - that is, the Church. The beast from the sea and his evil companion the false prophet (the beast from the earth which represents the false religious side of Rome) are thrown into the lake of fire. (This was previewed in Revelation 14:9-11.) In John 15:6 we see that a similar fate awaits all who oppose Christ.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. (John 15: 6)" (KJV)

The same image is used here to describe the fate of this great enemy of God. Rome is utterly defeated and cast into the lake of fire to join all the others who have died in opposition to God. Why is it cast in alive? Rome was judged and sentenced while it was still very powerful and very much alive. Those who follow the beasts are then slain and become food for the birds as was foretold at the beginning of the battle. Notice, again, that even here we get the clear message that vengeance belongs to God alone. The followers of the beast are not killed by the armies of heaven but by the sword of the one on the white horse - that is, by Jesus, the righteous judge. Jesus marches with an army but he does not need an army to defeat Rome. He destroys the armies of the earth by the sword which issues from his mouth. What is this sword? It may portray his word, which as John 12:48 tells us will be used to judge all who reject Christ.

"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (John 12: 48)" (KJV)

Chapter 20 – Apocalyptic Postmillennial

What is the context of this chapter? Rome has been defeated and Satan's plan to destroy the Church through Rome has failed. The Church has emerged from the conflict completely victorious and triumphant.

Chapter 20	The millennium and final judgment
Chapter 20: 1 - 3	Satan bound
Verse 1	The vision of the angel
Verses 2 - 3	The binding of Satan
Chapter 20: 4 - 6	The saints reign
Verse 4	Classes of saints reigning with Christ
Verse 4d - 6	The first resurrection
Chapter 20: 7 - 10	Satan loosed
Verses 7 - 9	Satan's last rebellion
Verse 10	Satan's final doom
Chapter 20: 11 - 15	The final judgment
Verse 11	The throne and the judge
Verses 12 - 15	The dead and their judgment

Revelation 20: 1-3, the representation of the binding of Satan, for the millennial season. The absolute limitation of his power over men for the time being.

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. (Revelation 20: 1-3)” (KJV)

An angel from heaven comes down with the key of the bottomless pit. From this we learn two important things. First, Satan has now been defeated since he possessed this key in Revelation chapter 9 but has now lost it. Second, this scene is being observed from earth; that is, John sees the angel come down from heaven. The scene we are about to see is being viewed from an earthly objective. First, how has Satan been defeated? Does this refer to the end of the world? No. Remember the context. The first 19 chapters of this book have dealt exclusively with the conflict between Rome and the Church. Rome has now been

completely destroyed. Satan's plan to destroy the Church through Rome has been completely stopped. How is this portrayed? By showing Satan bound for one-thousand years. What does this picture mean? *That* with regard to Rome Satan has been completely bound and defeated. The number 'ten' represents "completeness" and the number "thousand" indicates "complete completeness." (Remember that $144,000 = 12 \text{ squared} \times 10 \text{ cubed}$.) represented all of God's people. Numbers are raised to powers to emphasise their meanings.) Satan's defeat with regard to Rome was a complete defeat; hence, he is portrayed as being bound for one-thousand years. Remember that in apocalyptic language periods of time are often used to portray a state of affairs or a condition. The "one-thousand years" of this chapter represents a state of affairs and not a period of time. Here it is used to portray Satan's complete binding with regard to Rome. Later, it will be used to portray the Church's complete victory over Rome. Psalm 50:10 says God owns cattle on one-thousand hills; that is, his ownership is *complete*. Deuteronomy 7:9 says God keeps his covenant to one-thousand generations; that is, his faithfulness is complete. Satan's defeat here is with regard to Rome. With regard to Rome he is totally and completely defeated. He can no longer deceive the nations through Rome. He will not be able to defeat the Church using Rome. After the one-thousand years, Satan is loosed for a little while. What does this mean? Just as the one-thousand years referred to a state of affairs and not a period of time, so does this "little while" refer to a state of affairs and not to a period of time. To what state of affairs does it refer? What is the context? Although Satan has been defeated with regard to Rome, the Church of all true and baptised believers must have wondered if Satan might not attack again later and perhaps be more successful next time. God assures them in this chapter that although Satan will try again he will never be able to defeat the Church. God will continue to protect the Church in the future just as he protected it from Rome. The "little while" refers to Satan's inability to defeat the Church now or ever. Satan did the worst he could do through Rome and he failed completely. Although he will gather his strength and try again, his future attacks will be insignificant compared to what he did through Rome. So, they are portrayed as only lasting a little while. By saying Satan will return for a little while, God is saying that Satan's future attacks are nothing to worry about. Satan had at his disposal an evil, blood thirsty kingdom that ruled the world and was not able to defeat the Church in its infancy. Why should the Church fear future attacks?

The symbol: Satan is bound for one-thousand years and then released for a little while.

The meaning of the symbol: Satan, with regard to using Rome as a weapon against the Church, has been completely defeated, and, although Satan will

attack the Church again with other weapons, he will never be able to defeat the Church. Satan has already done his worst and failed.

Revelation 20: 4-6, the actual millennial reign of Christ and his church.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (Revelation 20: 4)" (KJV)

Who are on the thrones? **The Church.** They were the ones "to whom judgment was committed." (Revelation 6:10.) Jesus promised that those who overcame would share his rule over the nations. (Revelation 2:26-27 and 3:21.) How do we reign with Christ? John also sees the Christians who were killed by Rome; that is, these martyrs were killed because they had not worshipped the beast. Had these Christians been defeated? No. A clear message of this book is that death is not a defeat for a Christian. Defeat would have come if a Christian had renounced to Jesus in order to live. Their death for Christ was a victory over Rome. What happens to these martyrs? They live and reign with Christ for one-thousand years. The 'Revised Standard Version of the Bible' more accurately reads "they came to life" and reigned with Christ one-thousand years. John sees a bodily resurrection of those who had been killed for Jesus' sake by the Romans.

Note: This resurrection includes only those who died because they refused to worship the beast. That is, it includes only those who were killed by the Romans. This is not a general resurrection.

Is this scene literal or figurative? Figurative, like everything else in the vision. To take this scene literally would require that all who were killed by Rome be resurrected shortly after the book was written. What then does the scene portray? The same thing (in a new setting) that it portrayed in Ezekiel 37 where it was used once before. In Ezekiel chapter 37, Ezekiel sees a bodily resurrection occur in the Valley of Dry Bones. In verse 11, God tells him that the bones are "the house of Israel" who had lost all of their hope. The resurrection of those bones is used to portray the restoration of their hope.

"Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And

ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD. (Ezekiel 37:11-14)" (KJV)

Does such an interpretation fit the context of this passage? Yes. Martyrs are raised to life to portray the restoration of hope which the Church was experiencing. In Ezekiel the symbol was used to portray a national restoration from captivity. Here the symbol is used to portray the restoration of God's people from the captivity of Rome. What happens after they come to life? They reign with Christ for one-thousand years. Their restoration is complete and perfect. Their victory is just as complete as Satan's defeat.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20: 5*6)" (KJV)

Who are the rest of the dead? Those who died in service to the beast. (We saw them in Revelation 19:21.) This assembly does not come to life until after the one-thousand years are over. That is, they have no part in the state of affairs represented by the one-thousand year reign with Christ. This assembly has no part in the victory of the Church and is so portrayed as not being able to share or participate in the triumph of the Church. What is the first resurrection? It refers to those who rose before the one-thousand year reign. Verse 6 says that those who share in the first resurrection will reign with Christ for one-thousand years. This excludes the rest of the dead who came to life after the one-thousand reign. Why is it called the first resurrection? Because, later we will see a second resurrection. The first resurrection represents the vindication of the cause for which the martyrs gave their lives. Those who died are raised to show that they participate in the victory and the triumph of those who are still alive. Only Christians experience the first resurrection. In contrast, only the wicked will experience the second resurrection in verse 13. What is the second death? It is in contrast to the first death which had resulted in the two assemblies we saw in verses 4 and 5. The first death affected both those who were on the side of Christ and those who were on the side of the beast. The second death will only affect those who serve the beast. The second death (in verse 14) is portrayed by a lake of fire and represents the utter defeat of God's enemies. Those who experience the first resurrection shall be priests and shall reign with Christ for one-thousand years. Was this a status that these Christians had not previously enjoyed? No. The Church is called a royal priesthood in 1 Peter 2:9.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2: 9)” (KJV)

Revelation 1:5-6 tells us that we became part of a kingdom of priests when we were freed from our sins by the blood of Christ, and by faith in full commitment to Him. The "one-thousand years" simply portrays the perfection and completeness of a status which the martyrs enjoyed even before their death. Remember from Romans 5:17 that we reign in life through Jesus.

“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) (Romans 5: 17)” (KJV)

Note that even taken literally, this passage says nothing about the duration of Christ's reign. The saints are said to reign *with* Christ for one-thousand years. Ahaz ruled with his father Jotham for twelve years. Does that tell us how long Jotham reigned?

This part of the Book of Revelation 20: 7-22, dealing with the age to follow the millennium, can receive but the briefest treatment.

The first fact mentioned is the loosing of Satan, who is given another opportunity to test men in his antagonism to God.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. (Revelation 20: 7)” (KJV)

The loosing of Satan is followed by the last conflict with evil in the flesh that God will ever have.

“And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (Revelation 20: 8-9)” (KJV)

Some people are surprised to learn that the millennium will be followed by such a conflict, for they have supposed that all sin would be put down during that period. However, such is not God's plan. Sin will be in existence during the millennium, latent, or dormant, but still existent. It will not be able to raise its head as it does now, for righteousness will be in the ascendant, but it will be

crouching at the door ready to spring into life and action as soon as an opportunity appears.

Moreover, the opportunity appears when Satan appears. The truth is that the millennial age will be man's last chance on this earth to decide whether he will voluntarily serve God or not. It will be a chance under most favourable circumstances, for the earth which will then have within its view the visible glory of Christ and His church in the air; it will have the advantage of all the experiences of past ages, and all the excellency of God's power and goodness in the millennium itself, but it will fail as it has always failed since the garden of Eden. When Satan is loosed there will be those on earth who, neither regenerated nor united to Jesus Christ, will again yield to his seductions, and oppose God. They will even dare to compass the beloved city, the earthly Jerusalem, the citadel of the saints, and then it is that the last judgment begins to fall.

We, therefore, see next, the destruction of Satan himself

“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20: 10)” (KJV)

His time has come at length, and he will deceive the nations no more. Notice who have preceded him into the lake of fire and brimstone.

“Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. (Revelation 20: 11-13)” (KJV)

The judgment of the dead follows, by which is to be understood doubtless, all the dead from Adam to that time, meaning the end of the world, except of course, the saints who were reigning with Christ throughout the millennium.

Notice too, that the present earth and heaven flee away, also that a “book of life” is mentioned. This book, doubtless, contains the record of the saved ones during the millennial reign.

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Revelation 20: 14)” (KJV)

The destruction of death and hell, or Hades, the place of the dead, which are personified here as representing the enemies of Christ.

Let us now go into details from the beginning. (*Bene, bene respondare.*)

The Main Images in Chapter 20

1. A one-thousand year reigning.
2. A first resurrection.
3. A thousand year death.
4. A little season of Satanic freedom.
5. A host from Gog and Magog.
6. An invasion of the Holy City.
7. A second resurrection.
8. A second death.
9. A judgment scene.
10. A lake of fire.

A Summary of the events in Chapter 20

1. Satan is bound for one-thousand years.
2. The martyrs come to life and reign with Christ for one-thousand years.
3. Those who died for Rome remain dead for one-thousand years.
4. After one-thousand years, Satan is loosed for awhile.
5. Satan calls together Gog and Magog and they attack the Holy City.
6. Fire devours the armies and Satan is cast into a lake of fire.
7. A judgment scene ensues.

How are we to determine what these symbols and events mean?

1. Remember the time frame of the Book of Revelation
2. Remember the context of the chapter
3. Look to the Old Testament to decode the symbols.
4. Remember how periods of time are used in this book.
5. Be consistent in applying our rules of interpretation.
6. Leave our preconceptions at the door.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and

brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Revelation 20: 7-10)" (KJV)

Satan is loosed after the one-thousand years are ended so that he will not detract from the figure of total victory which the one-thousand years time period portrays. The "little while" (verse 3) during which Satan is loosed should be contrasted with the one-thousand year reign. The Church's victory was total and complete. Satan's future victories will never be total or complete. Satan has not been loosed for one-thousand years but only for a little while. What are Gog and Magog? Ezekiel talks about Gog of the land of Magog in Ezekiel 38:2.

"Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him. (Ezekiel 38: 2)" (KJV)

There, as here, they represent "anybody yet nobody in particular." To convince the Jews that under the Messiah their glory will be secure, Ezekiel uses a symbolic battle with the untrue Gog of the land of Magog to show that they will be able to defeat any enemy with the Messiah on their side. Note the following similarities between the battle in Ezekiel chapters 38-39 and the battle here in Chapter 20:

1. The army is called from the four points of the compass with Gog as their leader.
2. The defeat of Gog and his army is total and complete.
3. Gog appears on the scene after the vindication of God's people.
4. The size of Gog's army is huge. It takes seven months to bury them in Ezekiel 39:12: "And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land."
5. The defeat takes place without God's people having to do anything.

The symbol (in Ezekiel and Revelation): God's people have just been vindicated from a terrible oppressor. A huge army gathers from all over the world to make war against them. God defeats that army without his people having to even lift a finger.

The army surrounds the beloved city. What is this city? It is the **new** Jerusalem which we will see in Revelation 21:2. What was the old Jerusalem? The dwelling place of God's people. What then is the new Jerusalem? The new dwelling place for God's people; that is, the new Jerusalem is the Church. Satan is cast into a lake of fire to portray his utter and complete defeat. Why has he been completely defeated? Because he has just been told that no matter what he ever does he will never be able to defeat the Church. Not one of his future attacks will ever be successful. His failure with regard to Rome will be the story of his life. His defeat is total and complete not just with regard to Rome but with

regard to any army, he may use to battle the Church no matter how large that army is. Revelation 20: 4 -10 have portrayed the triumph of the Church over Rome and the assurance of their future security. Verses 11-15 will show us the other side of the coin.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20: 11-15)” (KJV)

This section portrays a great judgment scene. Is it the final judgment? The time frame of the book and the context of this section indicate that it is not. The picture of God sitting in judgment is a common one and often refers to events other than the end of the world. Psalm 9:4 -7 uses a judgment scene to describe God's past judgments against the enemies of his people:

“For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them. But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. (Psalm 9: 4 – 7)” (KJV)

Also, remember from our earlier discussion that the fourth beast in Daniel 7 refers to the Roman empire. Read in Daniel 7: 9 - 10 what precedes the destruction of this fourth beast.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (Daniel 7: 9 – 10)” (KJV)

Does that sound familiar? Read Revelation 20:11-15 again. Before proceeding we need to review the first part of this chapter. In verse 4, those who died

because they refused to worship the beast are raised and reign with Christ for one-thousand years. Verse 6 tells us that the second death will not have power over this assembly. Verse 5 says that the rest of the dead will come to life after the one-thousand year reign - that is, they do not share in the victory and blessings of the first resurrection. The "rest of the dead" do not include any of God's people. The "second death" will have power over the "rest of the dead." What is the point? The "dead" in this chapter do not refer to all who ever died!

The contrast is between those who died in service to Christ and in opposition to Rome and those who died in service to Rome and in opposition to Christ. Read again:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20: 4-6)" (KJV)

This is the context with regard to which we must interpret Revelation 20:11-15 (see above).

Who then is judged here? The dead which are raised in verse 13. Who are they? They are the "rest of the dead" - that is, they are those who died in opposition to Christ and in the service of Rome. These verses show the contrast between those who stood with Christ and those who stood with Rome. Those who stood with Christ experience a complete and total victory symbolised by a one-thousand year reign. Those who stood with Rome experience a complete and total defeat symbolised by a death in a lake of fire. Death and Hades were defeated at Calvary's Cross yet are considered here with regard to Rome. (They were personified in revelation 6:8.) Similarly, Satan was defeated at the cross of Calvary but has been dealt with in this book with regard to his relationship with Rome. The second death portrayed here is reserved for those who did not share in the first resurrection; that is, for those who died in service to Rome and in opposition to Christ.

Summary of the events portrayed in Chapter 20

1. Those who lived or died in service to Christ and opposition to Rome experience a total and complete victory.

2. Those who lived or died in service to Rome and opposition to Christ experience a total and complete defeat.
3. Satan will attack the Church in the future but will never be successful even if he able to assemble the entire world on his side.

Does not that fit in nicely with the first 19 chapters? Is not that a message the initial readers of this book needed to hear? Chapters 21 and 22 conclude the book with a description of the triumphant and victorious Church. Different symbols are used to portray the Church's "newness." These chapters describe the beauty of the only Constitutional Church, the purity of the only Constitutional Church, the stability of the only Constitutional Church, the strength of the only Constitutional Church, the holiness of the only Constitutional Church, and the importance of the only invisible Constitutional Church of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and men. Let us be our greatest concern to see whether God's Word justify or condemn us now; for Christ will judge the secrets of all men according to the Holy Writ.

Chapter 21

The New Heaven and the New Earth, the Eternal State

Chapter 21: 1 – 22: 5 The City of God and the Eternal State

Chapter 21: 1 - 8

Verses 1 - 7

Verse 8

The Eternal State

Eternity and the righteous

Eternity and the unrighteous

Chapter 21: 9 - 10

Verse 9

Verse 10

The vision of the city introduced

The angelic invitation

The view of the great city

Chapter 21: 11 - 21

Verses 11 - 14

Verses 15 - 17

Verses 18 - 21

A description of the city

Her identity

Her size

Her splendour

Chapter 21: 22 – 22: 5

Verse 22

Verses 23 - 24

Verses 24b, 26

Verse 25

Verse 27

Life within the city

Her temple

Her light

Her honour

Her gates

Her population

The New Heaven and the New Earth (Revelation 21: 1). Observe the sequence of events suggested by this verse:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (Revelation 21: 1)” (KJV)

In the present time, we have the church; in the millennium will be the kingdom; and after that the new world where God shall be all in all. “Man’s soul is redeemed by regeneration through the Holy Spirit now; his body shall be redeemed at the resurrection, and his dwelling-place at the creation of the New Heaven and the New Earth.”

“And there shall be no more sea.” The sea is the type of perpetual unrest, and its absence after the metamorphosis of the earth answers to the unruffled state of solid peace which shall then prevail. A “river” and “water” are spoken in the next chapter, but no sea.

The descent of the holy city on the earth as the tabernacle of God.

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21: 2-8)” (KJV)

Here are revealed some wondrous and precious things. Always distinguish between the New Jerusalem out of heaven, and that earthly Jerusalem in which Israel in the flesh shall dwell during the millennium. The two are distinct. The one will be done away with when the other comes. This New Jerusalem will be

God's tabernacle, God's dwelling-place with men in the New Earth. It is the antitype of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and is also the same Greek word as that used of Christ's holy dwelling among us.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1: 14)" (KJV)

He was then in the weakness of the flesh, but at the new creation he shall be seen in the glory of his God-head.

The description of the city.

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their

glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 21: 9 – 22: 5)" (KJV)

All the details of this city suggest glory, beauty, security and peace. In the millennium, literal Israel in the flesh, dwelling in Jerusalem, is the antitype to the Old Testament earthly theocracy, but in this, the eternal (?) age, the heavenly Jerusalem is the antitype of the Church, composed of Jews and Gentiles. This idea seems to be suggested by the names of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles written on the gates and the foundations.

The fact that no temple is seen in this city is remarkable, and suggests that the means of grace cease when the end of grace has come. Uninterrupted, immediate, direct communion with God and the Lamb will then be enjoyed.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (Revelation 20: 1)" (KJV)

In Revelation 20:11 the earth and sky fled from the presence of God and no place was found for them. The figure of heaven and earth passing away is a common one. In Isaiah 13 God tears apart the earth and the stars to portray the judgment of Babylon by the Medes. In Isaiah 34 the heavens are dissolved and rolled together as a scroll to portray a judgment against Edom. God portrays the judgment of the ungodly by figuratively bringing their world to an end. See Nahum 1 with regard to Nineveh. See Micah 1 and Zephaniah 1 with regard to Judah. The destruction of the world in Revelation portrays the judgment of the Roman world just as similar language was used in the past to portray the

judgment of Babylon, Edom, Nineveh, and Judah. The end of the world is not being discussed here any more than it was being discussed in Isaiah 13, Isaiah 34, Nahum 1, Micah 1, or Zephaniah 1.

The language of judgment is language of destruction. The language of blessing which we see in this chapter is just the opposite - it is language of creation. A new heaven and a new earth are created in which the previous oppressor does not exist. The creation of a new heaven and a new earth in the Bible is used to portray the removal of some specific enemy or some other radical change in circumstances. In Isaiah 65 God creates a new heaven and earth because the former troubles have passed away.

In 2 Peter 3:13, we read:

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3: 13)" (KJV)

The new heaven and new earth in 2 Peter may or may not refer to the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21. The symbol of "a new heaven and a new earth" portrays a radical change in circumstance. The particular change under consideration must be determined from the context.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21: 2-3)" (KJV)

The New Jerusalem is the Church; the new dwelling place for God's people, the bride of Christ, the holy city. It comes down from Heaven in contrast to the beasts of Rome that came up out of the earth and sea.

The people of God have been referred to in the Book of Revelation as dwelling in Heaven and the wicked have been referred to as dwelling on Earth. Now that the wicked and their world are gone, the Church is portrayed as returning to a world which has been made new. Why will every tear be wiped away? Why will death be no more? Why will there be no more crying or pain? Because the former things have passed away. Remembering the context of this passage, what are the former things which have just passed away? The blood thirsty harlot and her two beasts. Rome is no more. The condition of the Church has changed dramatically. But could not this language apply to Heaven? Sure it could, however not if considered in context. Has similar language been used elsewhere to refer to events other than the end of the world? The following quotations from the Book of Isaiah are important:

“And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve. (Isaiah 14: 3)” (KJV)

“And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (Isaiah 65: 19)” (KJV)

“For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. (Isaiah 30: 19)” (KJV)

“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. (Isaiah 25: 8)” (KJV)

Why does Isaiah say these things? In order to emphasise that Israel's past troubles will be no more which is the same way the language is used in the Book of Revelation. The Roman persecution will be no more. Not convinced yet? Well, how about this? When will every tear be wiped away? When will death be no more? When will there be no more crying or pain? Revelation 21: 3 says that it will occur when the dwelling of God is with men.

“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. (Revelation 21: 3)” (KJV)

When will this be true? It already is true. God's temple and Spirit dwell in the believer; and, the Constitutional Church of Christ dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3: 16)”

“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2: 22)” (KJV)

God dwells with men now. These descriptions concerning crying, tears, pain, and death should not be taken literally. This language is symbolic and we must consistently treat it as such. Here, as in Isaiah, these descriptions portray the state of God's people after a specific enemy has been removed by God. What about the phrase "no more death"? Death was a weapon which Rome used against the Church. Death is personified in the book.

In Isaiah 28:14-18 the Judean leaders, who bribed the Assyrians to leave them alone, are described as having made a "covenant with death." Assyria, the oppressor, is called death.

"Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (Isaiah 28: 14-18) (KJV)

Rome, who also had the power of death, could accurately be called "death" and in that sense death would be no more. Additionally, Ezekiel 37 describes the Jews under Babylonian captivity as already being in their graves. So, when the captivity ended, death, in another sense, would be no more. When God defeated Rome he defeated Rome's power to inflict death. Rome would never again have the power of death over God's people.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21: 4-8)" (KJV)

All things are new! The former things (that is, Rome) has passed away and the Constitutional Church of Christ consequently finds itself in a new environment. The world of Rome has been destroyed and a new world has been created for the Church. It is done: Satan and Rome have been defeated. Their world has been destroyed. The blood of the martyrs has been vindicated. A new world has been created which does not include Rome. The Church has come down from Heaven

to enjoy its new environment. Everything has been finished with regard to Rome. It is done. Those who stood with Christ received fountains of living water. Those who stood with Rome received death in a lake of fire.

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. (Revelation 21: 9)” (KJV)

What are we about to see? Heaven? No. The angel says that we are about to see the Bride of the Lamb. The following verses describe the Church. Although many consider these verses to be a description of Heaven or of the Church in Heaven after the end of the world, the context suggests that these verses describe the Church's condition after the removal of Rome. Could it also describe the Church in Heaven? Possibly, but we will see below such a view has some rather big problems to work around.

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Revelation 21: 10-14)” (KJV)

Ezekiel's vision of the temple in Ezekiel 40 also takes place while Ezekiel is on a high mountain. This chapter parallels Ezekiel 40 in many of its descriptions. The holy city comes down from Heaven and has the glory of God. Again, remember that the city is portrayed coming down from Heaven because a new Rome-free world has been created in which it may dwell.

The Church is the body of Christ who reflects the glory of God (Hebrews 1:3).

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Hebrews 1: 3)” (KJV)

The glory of God is compared to the radiance of rare jewels, jasper, and crystal in Revelation 21: 11. It had a great high wall: What is "it"? The Church. It has twelve gates guarded by twelve angels with the names of twelve tribes inscribed

on each gate. The wall had twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles inscribed on each. Twelve is the number of God's people and this city is the dwelling place of God's people.

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. (Ephesians 2: 20)” (KJV)

The Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The city of God described here is only the Church - not Heaven.

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. (Revelation 21: 15-21)” (KJV)

Why is the city measured? Ezekiel measured what he saw in Ezekiel 40-43 in order to stress its holiness and separation from what is common.

“He measured it by the four sides: it had a wall round about, five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place. (Ezekiel 42: 20)” (KJV)

John measures the temple in Revelation chapter 11 for the same reason. What are the measurements? The city is a cube - 12,000 by 12,000 by 12,000 stadia.

(This description causes trouble for literalists since 12,000 stadia is about 1500 miles.)

The walls surrounding the city are 144 (12 squared) stadia high. The foundations of the city are adorned with twelve precious jewels and the twelve gates are made of twelve pearls. The streets are made of gold, transparent as glass. The Church is portrayed as a precious and beautiful city in the shape of a huge cube.

The number twelve (which portrays God's people) appears in every measurement. Note that the holy of holies in Solomon's temple was also in the shape of a cube. This city is where God dwells - this city is the Church.

"And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar. (1 Kings 6: 20)" (KJV)

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21: 22-27)" (KJV)

Why is there no temple? In the Old Testament the temple stressed the separation between God and man. God lived in the inner sanctuary where only the High Priest could enter. In this city God dwells with his people (see Revelation 21:3). There is no separation between God and Christians. Every Christian has direct access to God through Jesus. Why is there no need of sun or moon? Because the glory of God and the Lamb provide all of the light.

Isaiah 60:11 and 19-20 uses this same image to describe the condition of Israel after the restoration of the temple and the holy city. The gates of the city will never shut. Isaiah uses this image, also.

"Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. (Isaiah 60: 11)" (KJV)

"The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. (Isaiah 60: 19-20)" (KJV)

There will be no night because the glory of God and of the Lamb are always present. By its light shall the nations walk.

If this is a description of the Church after the end of the world then who are these nations?

The Church on earth is the light of the world. We are Christ's ambassadors. The nations of the world are portrayed as being drawn to the city by the light which it casts into the world.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (Isaiah 2: 2)”
(KJV)

Isaiah 60:10-14 uses this same image to describe the vindication of Jerusalem. Here it describes the vindication of the Church.

“And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 60: 10-14)” (KJV)

If this is a description of the Church after the end of the world then who are these kings of the earth who live outside the city in darkness?

Nothing unclean will enter. The city is holy and secure.

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. (Isaiah 52: 1-2) (KJV)

Only those who have been made clean by the blood of Christ are allowed to enter this city. This chapter has provided a description of the triumphant and victorious Church on earth. The Church shines among the nations and brings light to those living outside in darkness. The nations are drawn to it by the light

which it casts. Isaiah 2:2 said that all nations would flow to the Church from the moment it was established. A brief glance through a concordance reveals that the language used here in this chapter to portray the Church was used in the Old Testament to describe the present Church age under the rule of Christ.

Chapter 22

Chapter 22: 1 - 5	Paradise restored
Chapter 22: 6 - 21	Final Testimonies
Chapter 22: 6 - 11	The testimony of the angel and of Christ
Verse 6	The angel authenticates the prophecy
Verse 7	Christ Himself announces His soon coming
Verses 8 - 11	The angel pronounces the book unsealed
Chapter 22: 12 - 21	The closing testimony of Christ
Verses 12 - 15	His coming and rewards
Verses 16 - 19	His person and relationship to humankind
Verse 20a	Christ declares His coming soon
Verse 20b	The Constitutional Church of true believers replies to her Lord
Verse 21	The closing benediction

Remember what we previously have said, the fact that no temple is seen in the city of Jerusalem is remarkable, and suggests that the means of grace cease when the end of grace has come. Uninterrupted, immediate, direct communion with God and the Lamb will then be enjoyed.

The Bible student will be struck by the comparison evidently intended to be drawn between the portray in Revelation 22: 1 – 4, and the story of the garden of Eden and the expulsion of our first parents.

Conclusion or postscript to the book is found in Revelation 22: 6 – 21. In this conclusion there is nothing solemn than that stated in verse 11, which emphasises the thought that “the punishment of sin is sin, just as the reward of holiness is holiness.” “Eternal punishment is not so much an arbitrary law as a result necessarily following in the very nature of things as the fruit results from the bud.” In this same connection notice the allusion to the eternity of sin in Revelation 22: 15.

“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. (Revelation 22: 15)” (KJV)

Indeed, may God, the Heavenly Father, quicken us who know these things to perform all our duties in bearing witness to them, that some by all means may be saved. This duty is set before us in Revelation 22: 17.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22: 17)” (KJV)

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22: 1-2)” (KJV)

The description of the Church from the last chapter continues through the first part of Revelation chapter 22. The entire vision ends at verse 5. The remaining verses serve as the book's epilogue. River of the Water of Life: Water is a common symbol for the blessings of God. In Isaiah God's people were told that with joy they would draw water from the wells of salvation.

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. (Isaiah 12:3)” (KJV)

In **John 7** Jesus said that if anyone believed in him then that person would have rivers of living water flowing out of his heart.

Ezekiel 47 describes a sacred river flowing from the temple. The water here portrays the blessings which flow from God which the Church enjoys now and forever. Consider the following passages.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim. (Joel 3: 18)” (KJV)

About the fulfilment of above verse, compare with Acts 2.

Remember the Feast of the Tabernacles in Revelation chapter 7. Tree of Life with twelve fruits: This tree provides twelve different kinds of fruit twelve times

a year. Where have we seen that number before? This tree provides nourishment for God's people just as the original Tree of Life did. The fruit from this tree and the river of life which flows nearby portrays the blessings from God which the Church enjoys. Is this something which the Church has yet to receive? No. Read about the blessings which were promised by the Old Testament prophets then read the New Testament to find out when those blessings were received.

The leaves on the tree are for the healing of the nations. Again, we see nations which need the light and healing which this city - the Church - provides. Who are these nations outside of the city if this is a description of the Church in Heaven after the end of the world? This is a description of the Church today. The Church sheds light on the darkness outside. The Church provides healing to those who come. The invitation in 22:17 is for those outside of the Church to come and drink of the water of life. Could such descriptions apply to the Church after the end of the world? (No.)

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22: 17)” (KJV)

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22: 3-5)” (KJV)

There will be no more curse: Zechariah 8:13 says:

“And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong. (Revelation 8: 13)” (KJV)

God promised that he would make them a blessing instead of a curse.

Zechariah 14:11 says:

“And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. (Zechariah 14: 11)” (KJV)

Is it not that the portray we hold here? The Church, too, will dwell in security. The throne of God and of the Lamb is in it: God rules from his dwelling place which is the Church.

“And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcases of their kings in their high places. (Ezekiel 43: 7)” (KJV)

God's throne is located where he dwells - in the midst of his people forever.

“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2: 22)” (KJV)

The above describes the Church as a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. We shall see his face: We are members of a royal priesthood. We have direct access to the throne.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4: 16)” (KJV)

We may now boldly approach the throne of grace. Every Christian has the same access to God as the High Priest had under the Old Covenant. In fact, we have more - we may approach the throne boldly at any time whereas the High Priest could only enter the holy of holies (the presence of God) once a year.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2: 9-10)” (KJV)

Again, this is a blessing that the Church is presently enjoying. There will be no more night, as we are the light of the world. The Church is the only source of light in a world of darkness. There is no night in the Church as Jesus Christ is our only light. They shall reign for ever and ever. Romans 5:17 says that we reign in life through Jesus Christ.

“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5: 17)” (KJV)

The Church reigns with Christ now and forever. Revelation 21:9-22:5 has provided a description of the Church and the blessings which are enjoyed by those belonging to the Church. Read again the passage.

We have seen how each description applies to the Church on earth and not just to the Church "in eternity." Further, we have seen several descriptions which could only apply to the Church on earth. The great persecuting power of Rome has been destroyed and Satan has been put in his place. The hope and security of the Church have been restored. God promises to protect them forever just as he rescued them from Rome. The book ends with a description of the triumphant, victorious Church which reigns forever with Jesus on its side. The message to the first century Church was not "Wait until the end of the world and you will enjoy these blessings." The message to the first century Church was "As the body of Christ you enjoy all of these spiritual blessings right now." That was the message they needed to hear and that was the message they received.

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 22: 10)" (KJV)

Epilogue of the whole Book of Revelation

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22: 6-7)" (KJV)

As in the prologue, the epilogue begins with the time frame for the vision. Revelation 1:1 says that the events in the book must soon take place. Revelation 1:3 says that the time for fulfilment is near. Here in Revelation 22:6 we see that what John had seen must soon take place. Later in Revelation 22:10 we see the same message.

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. (Revelation 22: 10)" (KJV)

What can be said for any interpretation of this book that ignores these clear declarations? One must certainly work hard to misunderstand them!

"I am coming soon." The Greek "taku" or "takos" means quickly, speedily, and without delay. To what does this refer? In what way did Jesus come quickly soon after the book was written? He came in judgment against Rome. Look at Matthew 24:30.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24: 30)" (KJV)

To what coming does that verse refer? Jesus' coming in judgment against Jerusalem. Matthew 24:34 does not allow us to apply Matthew 24:30 to the end of the world.

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (Matthew 24: 34)” (KJV)

Similarly, the comings promised here refer to Christ's coming in judgment against Rome. Applying these statements to the end of the world violates the period of the book and the context of the book.

“And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. (Revelation 22: 8-9)” (KJV)

John has been told before not to worship this angel. The message here as in 19:10 was, that the deliverance of the Church from Rome was the work of God and all of the glory and honour, for the deliverance belongs to him.

The distinction drawn

“And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22: 10-14)” (KJV)

John is told not to seal up the book because the time for its fulfilment is near. In Daniel 8:26 Daniel gets the opposite command regarding a vision which he saw.

“And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. (Daniel 8: 26)” (KJV)

God tells Daniel to seal up his vision because its fulfilment pertains to many days hence. When was Daniel's vision fulfilled? Four-hundred years later. John receives the opposite command because what he saw will be fulfilled soon. Many commentators say that nothing in the book of Revelation has been

fulfilled yet. What do you think about this mystery book? Again Jesus promises to judge Rome soon. He tells the wicked to continue in their wickedness because their time is short. Rome was so entrenched in their evil that Jesus knew they would never change. He sarcastically tells them that if they want to do more wickedness they had better hurry. (Again, this verse is difficult to apply to the end of the world. Does Jesus want all sinners to continue sinning?) The tree of life in the holy city belongs to those who have washed their robes in the blood of Christ.

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7: 14)” (KJV)

The wicked are portrayed as being outside the gates.

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22: 16-17)” (KJV)

Jesus is the root and the offspring of David. He is the promised Redeemer. He is the fulfilment of prophecy. The Holy Spirit and the Church invite those outside to come and drink the water of life. When is this invitation extended? Now. No invitation will be extended after the end of the world. The water of life is a blessing which Christians may enjoy on earth.

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22: 18-19)” (KJV)

The plagues in this book portray the judgment of God and as such may in the general sense befall anyone at anytime. This verse causes problems for literalists who claim that the plagues in this book portray, among other things, nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. How could such a plague be said to befall one who added words to this prophecy? What happens to those who take away from these words? They lose their share in the tree of life and in the holy city. That is, the right to the tree of life we saw in 22:14 can be taken away.

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22: 14)” (KJV)

The doctrine of "Once saved, always saved" is not a sound doctrine.

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Revelation 22: 20-21)” (KJV)

Jesus came in judgment against Rome just as he came in judgment against Jerusalem. The book ends with encouragement for those suffering persecution. They had nothing to fear - Jesus was coming soon.

“So Be It” – “Amen”

The word ‘AMEN’ solemnly confirms that which went before; and Jesus is the great Confirmer; immutable, for ever is ‘the Amen’ in all his promises. Sinner, I would comfort thee with this reflection. Jesus Christ said, ‘Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ If you come to him, he will say ‘Amen’ in your soul; his promise shall be true to you. He said in the days of his flesh, ‘The bruised reed I will not break.’ Oh thou poor, broken, bruised heart, if thou comest to him, he will say ‘Amen’ to thee, and that shall be true in thy soul as in hundreds of cases in bygone years. Christian, is not this very comforting to thee also, that there is not a word which has gone out of the Saviour’s lips which he has ever retracted? The words of Jesus shall stand when heaven and earth shall pass away. If thou gettest a hold of but half a promise, thou shalt find it true. Beware of him who is called ‘Clip promise,’ who will destroy much of the comfort of God’s word.

Jesus is ‘Yea and Amen’ in all his offices. He was a priest to pardon and cleanse once, he is amen as priest still. He was a king to rule and reign for his people, and to defend them with his mighty arm, he is an amen king, the same still. He was a prophet of old, to foretell good things to come, his lips are most sweet, and drop with honey still—he is an amen prophet. He is amen as to the merit of his blood; he is amen as to his righteousness. That sacred robe shall remain most fair and glorious when nature shall decay. He is ‘amen’ in every single title which he bears; your husband, never seeking a divorce; your friend, sticking closer than a brother; your shepherd, with you in death’s dark vale; your help and your deliverer; your castle and your high tower; the horn of your strength, your confidence, your joy, your all in all, and your ‘Yea and Amen’ in all.

Great Prophetic Themes Consummated in Revelation

The book of Revelation is one of the most feared books in Christendom. It is feared because of the horrors of judgment of which it speaks, and because of its intense symbolism and ordering of events has made it very difficult for the modern reader to interpret. Many students of the Bible have studied every major doctrine of the Scripture, and every book of the NT except for Revelation and its eschatology because they are so confused on how to interpret the book. Truly there are many interpretations and methods of interpreting to decide between, but it is sad that this has led to its neglect, for it is the only book in the NT that pronounces a blessing upon those who read it (1:3). Despite the difficulties in interpreting all the symbolism and understanding the time-frame of the seals, trumpets, and bowls, much of the interpretation of the book can be known. The macro-structure can be identified with a fair amount of accuracy and certain themes are apparent. With this in mind I will address the macro-structure of the book and elaborate upon the development of the book's three most prominent themes.

Macro-Structure

The book is broken down into past, present, and future events (1:19). Chapter 1 contained what John had already seen. Chapters 2 through 3 were epistles written to seven churches which then existed in Asia-Minor. Chapters 4 through 22 are prophetic of future events which John was able to see in the Spirit (4:1-2).

There are three series of judgments pictured, each happening in seven stages: opening of seals (6-8:1), blowing of trumpets (8:2-11:19), and the emptying of bowls (15-16:21).

Seven major visions are depicted in the book. The first vision is that of the exalted Christ when He appeared to John and instructed him to write to the seven churches (1). The second is that of the heavenly throne room where the seven-sealed book is first depicted as being in the hand of the One who sits on the throne. The Lamb who was slain appears in order to open the contents of the book (4-5). The third vision appears between the 6th and 7th seals, where 144,000 Israelites are sealed by angels so as to protect them from the judgment to come upon the earth. This is followed by a multitude of every sort of people who came out of great tribulation, appearing in the presence of the Lamb (7). The fourth vision appears between the 6th and 7th trumpet, where thunderings uttered words that were forbidden to be recorded, followed by John eating a book given him by an angel (10). The vision continues with the introduction of the two witnesses in Jerusalem (11:2-13). The fifth vision is of the conflict between God and Satan, where Satan is cast to the earth and persecutes the

saints after his attempt to defeat the Messiah was frustrated (12). The sixth vision is the destruction of Babylon, the harlot who prostituted the true religion of the Messiah (17-18). The seventh vision pictures the final victory of God over evil and the establishment of His earthly kingdom (19-22:6).

The book depicts the end of the age in three different segments: one ending at chapter six, one at the end of chapter eleven, and one at the end of chapter 16. This is evidenced by the many phrases depicting the finality of things. The import of this leads us to believe that the seals, trumpet, and bowl judgments overlap in time-frame. Although they are to be distinguished from one another, they seem to describe similar events, causing us to believe that they happen simultaneously, or at least at approximately the same time. Thus chapters 4-6, 8:2-11 cover the entire seven year tribulation period twice, and chapters 12-16 begin to explain the period a third time, seemingly starting at the midst of the seven-year period, although this is debated. Chapters 17-20, then, go into detail over the last few events immediately preceding the establishment of the kingdom on earth.

Having established the macro-structure of the book, we will turn our attention to the three primary themes of Revelation: God's judgment on evil, the establishment of God's kingdom, and the overcoming of the people of God.

God's Judgment on Evil

I have heard it said all too often that the tribulation is the "devil's hay-day." It is a common fallacy to think that all the evils to come upon the earth are from the devil. Although he does yield an unparalleled amount of power during this period, it is given him by God for God's purposes. God uses him for His own purposes just as He did in the case of Job (Job 1-3). God granted Satan this power for God's purposes to be accomplished. Beyond this, however, the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments all come directly from the throne of God. This is the time in which God punishes His people (Jews) for their sins and rejection of the Messiah (the time of Jacob's trouble), and the Gentiles for their sins and rebellion against God. It culminates with Jesus coming back and destroying the armies that fight against Him (19). This is God's "hay-day," not Satan's.

Of the major themes of the book, the theme of judgment is the most apparent. A bulk of the book is taken up with the subject (the majority of chapters 6, 8-9, 11, 14-20). It could actually be said that judgment begins with the epistles to the seven churches. Although we do not see judgment being administered, various threats of judgment are given to them if they would not repent of their deeds.

The first judgment we see being administered begins with the seals. There is debate as to whether or not the first seal is judgment by an evil administrator or

blessing by Jesus Christ (6:1-2). The second seal, however, is clearly judgment. Here a red horse is given a sword to take peace from the earth. This resulted in men killing one another in war (4:3-4). The third seal brings famine, seemingly to purge unbelieving Israel from their land in the same way Joshua used the destruction of the fields to purge the Canaanites from the land in the days of the Conquest. The fourth seal brings the murder of 1/4 the population of the earth. The fifth seal predicts martyrdom to the saints still living on the earth, but this is not a result of God's wrath (6:9-11). At the sixth seal the cosmos is affected. The sun turns black, the moon becomes as blood, the stars fall from heaven, and the people of the earth hide themselves from the Lamb of God because of His great wrath (6:12-17).

There is a pause in the administration of wrath to seal the 144,000, and gathering of the great multitude to heaven. It is resumed, however, through the seven trumpets, which are given at the opening of the seventh seal (8:1-2). The earth and the cosmos, and not necessarily the people of the earth, are the primary focus of these judgments. The 1st through 4th trumpets result in the burning of 1/3 of the trees and all the grass, 1/3 of the sea becomes blood and kills 1/3 of the sea-life and destroys 1/3 of the ships, 1/3 of the fresh-water turns bitter and kills many, and 1/3 of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. The fifth trumpet occasions the release of demons from the bottomless pit who sting men, bringing them near to death, but leaving them in torment (9:1-12). The sixth seal releases an army which kills another 1/3 of earth's population (9:12-21). The seventh seal finishes the judgments (10:7), bringing the kingdom of God to earth (11:15-19).

The vision of chapter 12 is very important. Not only is it the backdrop to explain the persecution against the saints that follows, but it begins the judgment of Satan. It starts with him being cast to the earth after a failed attempt to destroy the Messiah (12:1-9), after which he turns to the persecution of believing Israel (12:12-13, 17). In his final attempt to destroy God's people, he raises up the beast (anti-christ) and false prophet (leader of false religion) to propagate his worship on the earth (13:1-17). The beast is given power to overcome the saints as well (13:7).

God's judgment upon Babylon and those who received the beast's mark is then announced (14:8-11), followed by the killing of more people (14:14-20).

At this time the bowl judgments are poured out upon the earth. At the pouring of the first four bowls sores were given to those who received the beast's mark, the sea becomes as blood and kills everything in it, the rivers turn to blood, and the sun scorches men (16:1-9). The fifth bowl is directed toward the beast's kingdom. It brings darkness and pain (16:10-11). The sixth bowl does not bring judgment, but gathers men together to Armageddon to bring them their

judgment when the Lamb returns to earth (16:12-16). The last bowl ends the age with a great upheaval of the earth and the destruction of the great city Babylon, where the beast dwells (16:17-18:24). After this, the Lamb returns to earth as a conquering King when He destroys the evil armies fighting against Him, casts the beast, false prophet, and those who received the beast's mark into the Lake of Fire, and binds Satan in the bottomless pit for 1000 years (19:11-20:3). After the 1000 years are expired Satan is loosed, wherein he leads a rebellion against God one final time (20:7-9). Finally Satan, the first to sin against God, is defeated and cast to the Lake of Fire (20:10). Immediately the sin-cursed heavens and earth are destroyed and the dead are judged (20:11-15).

In the end, evil men, Satan, and the sin-cursed world have all been judged. Evil no longer reigns, but God's kingdom is established in pure righteousness.

The Establishment of God's Kingdom

The establishment of God's Kingdom on earth comes in two stages: the destruction of evil, and the coming of eternal life with the new heavens, new earth, and New Jerusalem.

The first allusion to the kingdom of God is John's association of the church as being "kings and priests to God" (1:6).

As with the judgment of evil, the first mentions of the coming kingdom are found in the letters to the seven churches. The church at Thyatira was promised to have power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron (2:26-27a). The church of the Laodiceans was promised to sit with Jesus in His throne, another reference to the coming kingdom (3:21).

The twenty-four elders and four beasts sang a song wherein were the words "we shall reign on the earth" followed their identification as kings and priests (5:10). Then we are moved to see a great multitude appearing in heaven who came out of great tribulation. The Lamb, "who was in the midst of the throne," was to wipe away all their tears. These saints had been redeemed and were in anticipation for the soon-coming kingdom (7:9-17).

At the 7th trumpet in chapter 11, which is John's second picture of the end of the age, Christ returns to the earth to set up His kingdom. It is announced by an angel saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever" (11:15). Jesus takes to Him great power and begins to reign (11:17).

Chapter 12 resumes the idea of kingdom when it refers to the Messiah as the man child who was "to rule all nations with a rod of iron" (12:5). The next

inference to the kingdom appears in 14:1-5 where the 144,000 are pictured with the Lamb on Mt. Zion singing a new song that no one else could know. The receiving of the kingdom was just around the corner for these redeemed Jews.

Until 19:11, the coming of Christ is only alluded to, briefly mentioned, or vaguely explained, but now John turns His complete attention to the revealing of Christ from heaven and the subsequent establishment of the kingdom of God. Jesus returns to earth in strength and glory to establish His kingdom. The setting up of the kingdom occurs in two stages: the millennial reign on earth, and the eternal reign in the new heavens and new earth.

The first thing Jesus does is finish the problem of evil. He destroys those who are fighting against Him, and casts the beast and false prophet into the Lake of Fire with those who had received the beast's mark (19:20). Satan is bound by an angel into the bottomless pit, to be kept there for 1000 years (20:1-3).

Finally, the souls of all the righteous dead and martyred tribulation saints are raised to reign with Christ for a thousand years (20:4-6). This is the time known as the Millennium. It is a time of restrained evil because Satan is bound, but evil is not completely eradicated yet. Satan is loosed from his prison and allowed to deceive the nations once more. He gathers a final rebellion against God, at which time God destroys Him by casting him into the Lake of Fire, along with those who followed him (20:7-10). Following this is the destruction of the earth and heavens, and the final judgment of men (20:11-15).

The problem of evil being completely taken care of, the new heavens and new earth are created, and John sees the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven for the bride of the Lamb (21:1-2). It is a glorious city for the saints of the Most High God. John gives a detailed description of the city, demonstrating its splendor and glory (21:9-22:6). It is here that the saints will dwell with their Savior for eternity (21:3-7).

After long anticipation, first with the OT saints, and then with the NT saints, the kingdom of God is established upon earth and righteousness reigns.

The Overcoming of the People of God

As was the case with both the themes of judgment on evil and the coming of the kingdom, so too the theme of overcoming first peers its head in the letters to the seven churches. Every church was promised something if only they would overcome their circumstances. The church at Ephesus is promised the tree of life to whoever overcame their spiritual stupor (2:7). The church of Smyrna is promised eternal life if they overcome. They would be part of the first resurrection, and escape the second death, if they would be faithful even to death

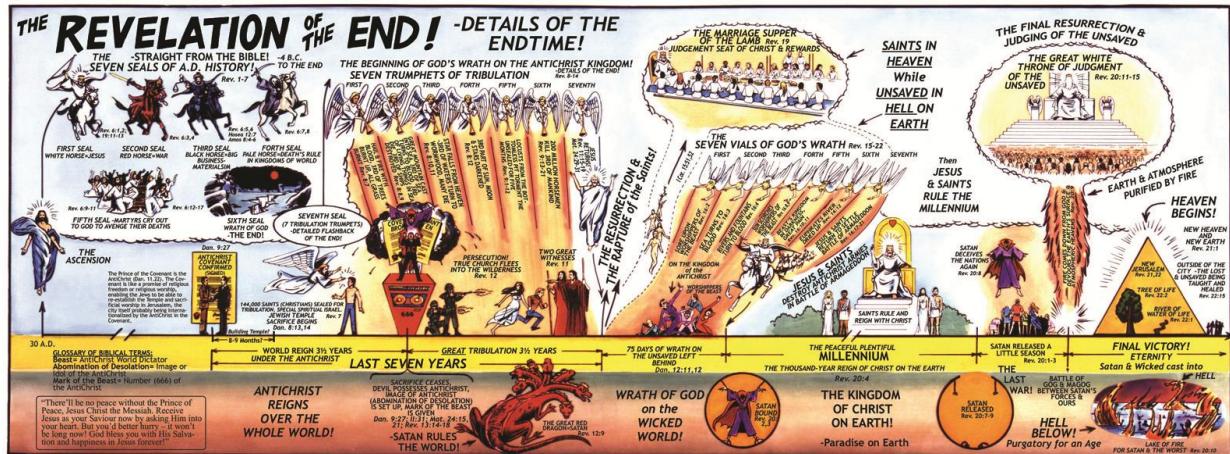
(2:10-11). The church in Pergamos is promised that they will eat the hidden manna and receive a stone with a new name written on it if they will overcome the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (2:15-17). If the church of Thyatira would keep doing works which follow the pattern of Jesus instead of the false-teacher Jezebel, and thereby overcoming, they would be granted power over the nations (2:20-27). The church at Sardis was promised to be clothed in white clothing, have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and have their names confessed before God and the angels if they would overcome by perfecting their works before God (3:3-5). The Philadelphia church would overcome by holding on to what they already had, and would inherit the New Jerusalem (3:11-12). The Laodicean church was promised to sit with Christ in His throne if they would overcome their spiritual arrogance (3:21).

The next time we have overcomers mentioned is in the great vision of the struggle between Michael and Satan. When the devil was cast out of heaven he persecuted the saints, but "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony..." (12:12). Even in the face of great persecution the people of God could overcome the enemy, though it appeared as though the devil was overcoming them (13:7). That he did not overcome them is also evidenced in 15:2-3 where the saints who had gotten victory over the beast, his image, and his mark stood on the sea of glass singing the song of Moses (15:1-4).

The last mention of overcoming is made by Jesus Himself. He promised that he who would overcome would inherit all things, and Jesus would be his God, and he could be Jesus' son (21:7). In the end the saints who endure, overcome false doctrine, evil works, the beast, Satan, and any other foe, inherit the kingdom of God prepared for them.

Conclusion

The three themes I have elaborated upon, based on the macro-structure of the book, are not the only themes, but are the central message of the book. We are able to receive the same message as did the early church: The Lord is coming soon to destroy evil, at which time our patience and endurance of suffering will be rewarded, when we overcome and receive the kingdom that Jesus will set up at His second coming, there to be with the Lord forever. This message brings hope to every age, regardless of one's interpretation of the finer points of the book. We all wait in hopeful anticipation for the day in which we "shall see his face" (22:4).



Commentary on the Book of Revelation

By Arno C. Gaebelein (Public domain)

Illustrations, Notes and Additions by Rev. Philippe L. De Coster,
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I. THE PATMOS VISION OF THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN

Chapter 1

1. *The introduction* (Revelation 1:1-3)
2. *Greeting and benediction* (Revelation 1:4-5)
3. *The praise* (Revelation 1:6-7)
4. *The testimony of the Almighty* (Revelation 1:8)
5. *John in Patmos* (Revelation 1:9-11)
6. *The vision of Christ in glory* (Revelation 1:12-16)
7. *The commission* (Revelation 1:17-20)

1:1-3. Introduction

Verses 1-2. The nature of the book

Verse 3. The purpose of the book

Revelation 1:1-3.

The book does not contain “revelations” but it is one great revelation, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” The third verse is of much importance. It pronounces a blessing upon all who read and hear the words of this prophecy and who keep the things that are written therein. Here, as already stated, we read that the Revelation is a great prophecy.

1:4-8. Salutation from the author

Verse 4a. The author and recipients of the book

Verse 4b-8. Benediction from the Triune God

Revelation 1:4-5.

The churches addressed were in the Province of Asia. (See Acts 16:6; Acts 19:10.) The words of greeting “Grace and peace unto you” tell of the two great possessions of the Church. Though the professing Church may fail in her testimony, grace and peace, even in the dark days of apostasy, will never fail. In the greeting here Jehovah-God, the great “I am”—Who is, Who was and Who is to come—stands first. Then follows the Holy Spirit in His own completeness and His diverse activities, spoken of as “the seven Spirits.” And finally the name of our Lord. “He is the faithful witness,” who lived as such in holiness and perfect obedience on earth. “The First-Begotten from the dead” He died that shameful death on the cross and God raised Him from the dead. “The Prince of the kings of the earth.” This is His future title and glory.

Revelation 1:6-7.

This is a true glory-song. It contains the blessed gospel of grace. What He has done for us; what He has made us; and what we shall be with Him. It is the first doxology in this book. See the swelling praise and worship two-fold, three-fold, four-fold and seven-fold in Revelation 4:11; Revelation 5:13; Revelation 7:12. And then for the first time in this book His personal, visible and glorious coming is announced.

Revelation 1:8.

God, so to speak, puts His seal upon it. The words of the preceding verse, “Even so, Amen,” must be read with this verse. The speaker is Jehovah, the Almighty.

Part I. The Things Seen – The Patmos Vision, 1:9-20

1:9-20. The circumstances and the vision

Verses 9-11. The circumstances

Revelation 1:9-11.

John was in banishment in the Isle of Patmos. Patmos is a small rocky isle, and about ten miles long and six wide. According to ancient tradition this island was used as a place of exile for offenders who belonged to the better classes. John was exiled on account of his faithful witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. Does this mean "the day of the Lord," that is, the day of His visible manifestation, or does it mean He was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week? Dr. Bullinger teaches that the Lord's day means "the day of the Lord" ([Isaiah 2:12](#)), and says: "John was not in a state of spiritual exaltation on any particular Sunday at Patmos, as the result of which he saw visions and dreamed dreams. But as we are told he found himself by the Spirit in the day of the Lord." But this view is not correct. It is not the prophetic day of the Lord, but the Lord's day, the day which the early Church from the beginning celebrated as the day of His resurrection. In Corinthians we read of "the Lord's Supper" in the same way as "the Lord's Day" is used here. Nor could John have been projected to the day of the Lord when his first message given to him by the glorified Christ concerned the church and her history on earth.

Verses 12-16. The vision itself

Revelation 1:12-16.

A voice had spoken, as of a trumpet telling him to write in a book what he was about to see and to send the message to the seven churches. And as he turned he beheld the greatest vision human eyes have ever seen. He saw seven golden candlesticks (lampstands); these represent the seven churches (Revelation 1:20) and are symbolical of the whole Church. "In the midst," John saw one "like unto a Son of Man." But He is more than Man, He is the Ancient of Days as well as Son of Man, the Alpha and the Omega, in His humiliation and in His exaltation. He was the Son of Man on earth; He is the Son of Man in glory. When He comes back to earth and receives the kingdom, He will receive it as Son of Man to judge the earth in righteousness. Here we behold Him in His judicial character. The robe down to His feet expresses His dignity as the King-Priest, who is about to enter upon His future work. The golden girdle is symbolical of His divine righteousness. His white head and hair identify Him with the person whom Daniel saw sitting in judgment (Daniel 7:9-12). The flaming eyes, the

fiery burning feet, the voice like the sound of many waters, the two-edged sword, all are symbolical of His glory and character.

There is one feature of the vision which needs an explanation. What do the seven stars mean, which are in the right hand of the Son of Man? Revelation 1:20 gives the answer, They are the seven angels of the seven churches. Angels and stars are symbolical figures. The application of these terms to church-officers or bishops and pastors is incorrect. Stars are used in scripture to typify true believers. Stars are heavenly bodies which shine during the night; so are true believers in a heavenly position with the responsibility to shine in the night. The lampstands represent the visible, professing Church; the stars represent the true believing element in the Church. They are in the right hand of Himself, held securely there. Furthermore, only true believers have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith. The stars are called angels, because an angel is a messenger and true believers are likewise that.

Verses 17-18. John's response to the vision

Verse 19. The key to all the visions of the book

Verse 20. The meaning of the first vision

Revelation 1:17-20.

John fell at His feet as dead. Compare with [Daniel 10:4-11](#). The vision was overpowering. But graciously His hand rests upon His prostrated disciple, the same who once leaned upon His bosom, and he hears the blessed words His people know and love so well, "Fear not!" Once more He bears witness as to Himself He is "He that liveth," the Jehovah, the Self-existing One; He was dead; He died the sinner's death and won the victory. He is alive forevermore; as the Risen One He has the key of Hades and of death. Then follows the commission which the reader finds fully explained in the Preface and Key to Revelation.



The Island of Patmos, with the white monastery of St. John, his exile resort

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE, THE SEVEN CHURCH MESSAGES, AND THEIR PROPHETIC MEANING

Chapter 2

1. *Ephesus: The post-apostolic period (Revelation 2:1-7)*

2. *Smyrna: The period of persecution (Revelation 2:8-11)*

3. *Pergamos: The corruption period (Revelation 2:12-17)*

4. *Thyatira: The Romish corruption (Revelation 2:18-29)*

The two chapters which follow the introductory chapter contain seven messages to seven local churches which were in existence in the province of Asia in the days when the Apostle John was prisoner in the isle of Patmos. The view held by the late Dr. Bullinger and a few of his followers that these churches are yet to come into existence in connection with believing Jews during the great

tribulation with which the age closes, must be rejected as extremely fanciful. The omniscient Lord on the throne detected in each of these local assemblies certain traits which at different periods of His church on earth would become the leading features. We have therefore, in the seven messages the history of the entire Church in embryo. This assertion is fully confirmed by a closer study of these messages.

2:1-7. Ephesus – the loveless church

Verses 1-3. Salutation and commendation

Verses 4-5. Complaint and warning

Verses 6-7. Praise and promise

Revelation 2:1-7.

Ephesus was the church characterized by the greatest purity in doctrine and in walk. To the Ephesians, as “the faithful brethren in Christ,” was addressed the most wonderful revelation God has given to man. It stands therefore for the model church in the apostolic age. But when Paul said farewell to the elders he predicted not smooth things, but the incoming failure (Acts 20:1-38). Ephesus means “desired” and that corresponds with her original holy character. He reveals Himself afresh as being in the midst and holding His own in His blessed pierced hands, so true of believers at all times. The descriptions of Ephesus suit the apostolic church, and immediately after the apostles had passed away, except John. But He finds fault with it. His omniscient eyes look to the heart and there He finds declension. “I have against thee that thou leavest thy first love.” He, the one altogether lovely was no longer the all absorbing object before their hearts. Paul manifests the full meaning of first love. His constant cry was: “Not I but Christ”--“That I may know Him”; for him to live was Christ. Declension began in the church not with less service, less suffering or anything else, but with a decreasing heart-devotion to the Person of our Lord. That is where all backsliding begins. He calls to repentance, a return to Himself The Nicolaitanes, whose works the church then hated, are mentioned again in the third message, where we shall define the word and the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. A promise to the overcomer follows.



Statues of Poseidon and Demeter, god of water and goddess of fertility, from Smyrna

2:8-11. Smyrna – the persecuted church

Verses 8-9. The persecution

Verses 10-11. The encouragement

Revelation 2:8-11.

Smyrna means “bitterness” and is a form of myrrh which was largely used for the embalming of the king of the Jews, the meaning of it was that the King would have to die. Smyrna was a suffering church, many of its members had to seal their faith by dying the martyr’s death. Corresponding with this characteristic, the Lord speaks of Himself as “The First and the Last, who was dead and is alive.” That is His comfort for the Church passing through the horrors of persecution and intense sufferings. In connection with this message to Smyrna the synagogue of Satan is mentioned. It means the Judaistic faction of the church, who, while they claimed to be Christians, also claimed to be Jews, observing the law, the Sabbath day and other parts of the legal system of Judaism. This synagogue of Satan helped in the afflictions of Smyrna. Nor is the

same “synagogue of Satan” missing today in the professing sphere of Christendom.

He announces that the devil would cast some of them into prison, that they should have tribulation for ten days, and that it would require faithfulness unto death to gain the crown of life. The Apostolic age was followed by the martyr age, which lasted up to the beginning of the fourth century. Pagan emperors under the inspiration of Satan, the roaring lion, persecuted the Church. No one knows how many hundreds of thousands died the martyr’s death, flayed and burned alive, cast before wild animals and cruelly tortured; thus they were faithful unto death and gained the crown of life. It is also significant that the address to Smyrna contains the number ten; Church history records ten great persecutions.

2:12-17. Pergamum – the worldly church

Verses 12-13. Where Satan’s throne was

Verse 14. The doctrine of Balaam

Verse 15. The doctrine of Nicolaitans

Verses 16-17. Warning and promise

Revelation 2:12-17.

After the devil had played the roaring lion for several centuries, trying to exterminate the church of Jesus Christ, he discovered that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.” He then stopped the persecutions suddenly and began to corrupt the Church. This is the meaning of the message to Pergamos, which means “twice married,” a typical name for the professing Church which claims to be the bride of Christ, but is married to the world. Pergamos is dwelling where Satan has his throne. Milton described Satan being in hell.

High on a throne of royal state, that far outshone the wealth of Ormuz or of Ind,
Satan exalted sat.

But that is not Scripture. Satan will be in hell, in his final abode “the lake of fire,” but he is not there now. He is the god of this world (age): his throne is right here on earth. And Pergamos had been married to the world. This is also indicated by the mention of Balaam, who cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, by inducing them to take the daughters of the heathen and thus give up their God-demanded separation. The Church then gave up her

pilgrim character, settled down in the world, became a world institution, as revealed by our Lord in the parable of the mustard seed. What happened in the beginning of the fourth century church-historians have proclaimed as the “triumph of Christianity.” It was rather “the defeat of Christianity,” for that happened which corrupted the Church of Christ.

The instrument of the devil used to bring about this was the emperor Constantine. He had a rival by the name of Maxentius, whom he faced in battle. Constantine claimed that the night before he had a vision of Christ bearing a cross with the words: “In hoc signo vinces (in this sign thou shalt conquer). He had the next morning a beautiful banner made, which was called the Labarum, and went forth to battle, in which Maxentius was defeated as well as another competitor by name of Licinus. Constantine then became emperor and nominally a Christian and head of the Church, while retaining his heathen title as Pontifex Maximus, the high-priest. Then the corruption of the Church resulted. The Church became a political world institution, like the mustard seed, rooting itself in the field (the world) became a great tree, opening its branches to the fowls of the air to defile (Matthew 13:1-58; see annotations there). Heathen priests became Christian priests. Heathen temples were changed into Christian churches; he demanded all children to be “christened,” that is, made Christians by putting water upon their heads; heathen days of feasting and drinking were made into Christian days, like our “Christmas” and nearly all the other saints’ days.

Here again the Nicolaitanes are mentioned, but, while the Ephesians hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, here in Pergamos we find the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and the Lord says: “which thing I hate.” What is it, then? Some say that there was a certain Bishop Nicol who taught bad doctrines and his followers were called “the Nicolaitanes.” But this Bishop Nicol is a fictitious person; he cannot be historically located.

Nicolaitanes is Greek; it is a compound. Nikao is a verb and means to have the upper hand, to domineer; laos means the people (our English “laity”). Nicolaitanes signifies “the domineers of the people.” A priestly class had sprung up in the Church, domineering over the rest of the people, the so-called laity. And this domineering class claimed a superior place in the body of Christ. This evil was rejected in Ephesus, but is fully sanctioned and tolerated in Pergamos. Priestly assumption became then, and ever since has been, the corruption of Christianity. This is what our Lord hates and what He hates we must hate with Him.

2:18-29. Thyatira – the paganised church

Verses 18-23. Commendation and complaint

Verses 24-29. Promise of the overcomer

Revelation 2:18-29.

The corruption which set in like a great flood with the fourth century increased till the depths of Satan (Revelation 2:24) were reached. Thyatira brings us into the period of the Papacy and its wickedness, ecclesiastical and otherwise. Here our Lord reveals Himself as “the Son of God.” Rome speaks more of Him as the son of the virgin, the son of Mary, than as the Son of God. The Roman Catholic apostasy has put a woman in the place of the Son of God. Her corruption is fully revealed in Revelation 2:20. Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, was permitted to teach and seduce God’s servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Jezebel the wicked woman represents the Papacy. Jezebel was a heathenish woman married to an Israelitish King. She was a queen and an idolatress and persecuted the true prophets of God (1 Kings 18:1-46; 1 Kings 19:1-21; 1 Kings 20:1-43; 1 Kings 21:1-29).

Apply all this to the Romish church with her spiritual fornication and idolatry. The church, or, rather, the papacy, assumes the place of teacher and dictator and Christ is rejected. The name Jezebel has a twofold meaning. It means a chaste one”; the other name is “dunghill.” Rome claims to be the bride of Christ; in reality she is a harlot, and called so in chapter 17 and therefore a dunghill of all vileness and corruption. In Revelation 2:21 we find another important hint. It is said, “She repents not.” Rome does not change. She is the same today in every respect as she was 500 years ago. She will continue in her perverted state of impenitence till her predicted doom will overtake her. (Compare Revelation 2:22 with chapter 17.) She is the woman of which our Lord spoke in the fourth kingdom parable in Matthew 13:1-58 (see annotations there) which took leaven (corruption) and put it into the three measures of meal (symbolical of the doctrine of Christ). It is noteworthy that beginning with the message to Thyatira the Lord announces His coming, that is, His second visible coming. Every following message speaks of it. This shows that the three preceding church periods and conditions are passed and the conditions pictured in Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea will continue till He comes. The apostolic age cannot be brought back; nor will there be again a persecution by Roman emperors nor will the church again become corrupted as in Pergamos. The Romish conditions continue to the end of the age.



Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea

Chapter 3

3:1-6. Sardis-the lifeless church

1. *Sardis: The reformation period (Revelation 3:1-6)*
2. *Philadelphia: The faithful remnant (Revelation 3:7-13)*

3. Laodicea: The indifferent and apostate Church (Revelation 3:14-22)

Verses 1-3. Dead orthodoxy

Verses 4-6. Blotting names out of the book of life

Revelation 3:1-6.

We have traced briefly the decline during the 1450-1500 years of Church history. The climax is reached in Thyatira, prophetically the Roman abomination and apostasy. In Sardis we see the progress of evil stayed. Roman Catholicism, as already mentioned, is a fixed and unchanging religious system. Rome will yet have for a brief season a startling revival and get back her place as the mistress of the nations. But in Sardis we see a reaction. Sardis means “those escaping.” It is the Reformation period, the movement which produced Protestantism. The Reformation itself was of God and the great men who were used were the most mighty instruments of the Holy Spirit. It was the greatest work, up to that time, since the days of the apostles. But out of it came the human systems which go by the name of Protestantism. The Reformation began well, but soon developed in the different Protestant systems into a dead, lifeless thing. They have a name to live but are dead. This is the verdict of our Lord upon the churches which sprung out of the reformation: “Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.”

3:7-13. Philadelphia – the missionary church

Verses 7-9. An open door to witness

Verses 10-13. Kept from the hour of testing

Revelation 3:7-13.

Philadelphia means “brotherly love.” As Sardis came out of Thyatira, a protest against it, so Philadelphia comes out of Sardis and is a protest against the dead, lifeless, Spiritless condition prevailing in Protestantism. Out of the deadness of the state churches over and over again came forth companies of believers, energized by the Holy Spirit. Philadelphia has been variously applied to early Methodism, the evangelical movements, missionary efforts and to the revivals of the nineteenth century. But it is more than that, It is a complete return to the first principles. The message makes this clear. It is the one message (besides Smyrna) in which the Lord does not say, “I have against thee,” it is that which pleases Him and which He commends. It is a revival and turning back to the first love. The Lord Jesus Christ is once more as the all absorbing object before the heart; Philadelphia repudiates all that dishonours Him and owns alone that worthy, ineffable Name. It is a faithful remnant gathering around His Name as there was

a faithful remnant in the closing days of the Old Testament (Malachi 3:16-17). All human pretensions are rejected. The truth of the unity of all believers is owned and manifested in brotherly love towards all the saints. They walk in the path of separation, in self-judgment, in lowness of mind; they have a little strength, which means weakness; they are a feeble few. Twice the Lord speaks of obedience to His Word. "Thou hast kept My Word"--"Thou has kept the Word of My patience." And the Philadelphian does not deny His Name.

These are the two chief characteristics of this phase of Christianity during the closing days of the professing Church on earth: Obedience to His Word and faithfulness and devotion to His Name. The Word and the Name are denied in the last days. The apostasy of Christendom consists in the rejection of the written Word and the living Word. And turning their backs upon a dead profession, going on in confessed weakness are such paralyzed in their service? Far from it! The Lord promises to open the door for service which no man can shut. Every child of God may test this. True and continued service is the result of true and continued faithfulness to the Lord. Especially is this service to be blessed to those who hold to a perverted Judaism (Revelation 3:9). And there is the great promise, which they believe and hope for, the coming of Himself to keep them out of the great tribulation (Revelation 3:10). In Philadelphia there is a revival of prophetic truth, an earnest waiting for the coming of the Lord. Philadelphia is not a defined church-period, but rather a description of a loyal remnant called out by the Spirit of God and bearing the final testimony to the whole counsel of God by word and deed. If the reader desires to please the Lord, then study the details of the message to Philadelphia and walk accordingly.



An impressive view of the theatre of Ephesus

3:14-22. Laodicea – the lukewarm church

Verses 14-19. Insufferable lukewarmness

Verses 20-22. Christ shut out

Revelation 3:14-22.

Laodicea means “The judging or rights of the people.” It is opposite of Nicolaitanism. The domineers of the people still go on in Rome, but in Protestantism the people (the laity) arise and claim their rights and do the judging. This condition was also foreseen by the Apostle Paul. “For the time will come when they (The laity) will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” ([2 Timothy 4:3](#)). We see in Laodicea the final religious and apostate conditions of Protestant Christendom and the complete rejection of the professing body. “I will spew thee out of my mouth.” He Himself is seen standing outside, which shows that He is rejected. But infinite grace! He knocks and is still willing to come in and bestow the riches of His grace.

The Philadelphian Christian, who is separated from the Laodicean state, whose heart is filled with the love of Christ can learn a lesson here. If our Lord stands outside and yet knocks and waits in patience, we too with Him outside of the camp where He is disowned, can try to gain admittance to the Laodicean hearts. Epaphras did this (Colossians 4:12-13). Laodicea consists in a proudly boasting spirit with total indifference to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His Name. It is a religiousness without any truth nor the power of the Holy Spirit. Lukewarmness expresses it all. “Lukewarmness, a perfect jumble of sacred and worldly matters. The word does not point chiefly to half heartedness. But as lukewarmness is produced by pouring of hot and cold water together in the same vessel, so in the Laodicean state, intense worldliness will be varnished over by plausible and humanitarian and religious pretences.”

Great reformation movements for the advancement of religion and the betterment of the world, the rejection of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation, are characteristic features of this final phase of Christendom. It will continue and wax worse and worse till His patience is exhausted. Then the true Church will be caught up with the departed saints to meet Him in the air, and Laodicea will be spewed out of His mouth. It is important to notice that Thyatira (Rome), Sardis (Protestantism) and the two phases of Protestantism represented by Philadelphia and Laodicea co-exist. They go on together. This is seen by the fact that in each our Lord speaks of His second coming (2:25; 3:3; 10-11, 16). The Lord takes His own to Himself. Rome and an apostate Protestant

Christendom continue on earth during the period of judgment, preceding the visible coming of the Lord.



There was the Sanctuary of Asclepius (also known as the Asclepium ...He was the Greek god of healing stuck dead by Zeus for bringing the dead to life.

III. THE THINGS WHICH ARE AFTER THESE, THE END OF THE AGE, THE CONSUMMATION, AND FINAL MESSAGES

Part 3. The Things which shall be hereafter.

Chapters 4 to 22

Chapters 4-5. The divine throne in heaven

4:1-5. The throne introduced

1. *The open door and the vision of the throne* (Revelation 4:1-3)
2. *The twenty-four elders and the throne* (Revelation 4:4-5).
3. *The four living creatures and the worship* (Revelation 4:6-11)
4. *Who is worthy to open the book?* (Revelation 5:1-3)

5. *The answer* (Revelation 5:4-5)

6. *The vision of the Lamb* (Revelation 5:6-7)

7. *Worship and praise* (Revelation 5:8-14)

Verse 1. The heavenly door

Verses 2-5. The heavenly throne

Revelation 4:1-3.

The scene changes suddenly. We are no longer on earth but are transported into heaven. The true Church is gone and the apostate Church, while still on earth to pass into the judgments of the great tribulation, is no longer owned by the Lord and, therefore, not mentioned. That is why the word “church” disappears entirely from the book after the third chapter. The open door and the voice which calls “come up hither” and John’s presence in glory in the spirit, clearly indicate symbolically the fulfilment of 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. That for which the faithful remnant waited, the blessed hope of the Church, has suddenly come to pass. The departure of the true Church from the earth will be as sudden as its beginning (Acts 2:1-2).

John’s first vision in heaven is the established throne, the sign and symbol of the universal government of God. While thrones on earth begin to totter and to fall and man’s day closes in the predicted upheavals, there is a throne which cannot be affected or disturbed. Yea, He who sitteth there and looks down upon earth and sees man’s rebellion and madness laughs at them and holds them in derision (Psalms 2:4). The occupant of the throne was to look upon like a jasper (rather the diamond) and a sardine stone. Our Lord and the glory of His person are symbolically represented in these stones. His glory in the brilliant stone, His redemption work in the blood-red sardine. The rainbow in emerald-green tells us that in the judgment about to come upon the earth mercy will also be remembered. It is the covenant sign. Though judgments come, yet mercy is in store for Israel and the earth.



4:4, 10-11. The twenty four elders

Who Are the Twenty-Four Elders of Revelation?

Revelation 4:4

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads

Much speculation has arisen as to who these twenty-four elders are: (1) a leader from each of the 12 tribes of Israel plus each of the 12 apostles, (2) twenty-four godly men from throughout biblical history and, (3) a special class of angels.

Matthew 19:28

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

The men and women of corporate national Israel are not raptured. The twelve apostles will serve as the judges of Israel during the Millennium. According to the Lord's promise, they are to sit on earthly thrones. In addition, John the Revelator is also John the Apostle. Did he see himself around the throne? Did he fail to recognize the other apostles? The text does not read twelve plus twelve; it speaks of twenty-four thrones. The twenty-four elders are not the tribal leaders of Israel and the twelve apostles.

Current established pre-tribulational models maintain that the Day of the Lord, and thus the Tribulation, begins with the breaking of the first seal. If this is the case, and the Church is raptured before the Tribulation, then it is understood that the Church must be found in heaven as Jesus prepares to open the seven-sealed scroll. The twenty-four elders, the men who John sees immediately after his vision begins in the fourth chapter of Revelation, are recognized as representative of the Church and as proof of the pre-tribulation rapture.

Here is how noted pre-trib scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum explains it,

"The identity of these twenty-four elders has been much debated. Some take it to refer to celestial beings, while others take it to refer to and represent the church. While the text does not clearly state as to what these twenty-four elders refer, there are clues in the text by which their identity can be deduced. First, these elders are clothed with white garments which throughout the Revelation are symbols of salvation. Celestial beings before the throne of God do not need salvation for they were not lost to begin with. But these elders were at one time lost and at some point received salvation as is seen by their wearing of the white garments.

"The second clue is the fact that they are wearing crowns. These crowns are not diadem crowns worn by those who are royal by nature, which would have been the case had these been celestial beings. These crowns are the stephanos crowns, the crowns of an overcomer; the type of crown given as rewards to the members of the church at the Judgment Seat of Christ."

"A third clue lies in their very title of elders. Nowhere else in Scripture is this term used to describe celestial or angelic beings. This term is used of humans in positions of authority either in the synagogue or church."

"Hence, from these three clues, the twenty-four elders must represent the church saints. If this is true, then they provide further evidence for a pre-tribulation Rapture. The church is already in heaven in chapter four and five before the tribulation begins in chapter six." (The Footsteps of the Messiah,

p.114).

"First, these elders are clothed with white garments which throughout the Revelation are symbols of salvation." Are white garments exclusively symbolic of salvation?

John 20:12

and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

Acts 1:10

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

White is a symbol of purity or sinlessness. Holy angels are also clothed in white.

"The second clue is the fact that they are wearing crowns."

The second argument that can be made against Fruchtenbaum's reasoning is that *stephanos* crowns, which Fruchtenbaum calls "overcomer" crowns are not worn exclusively by "overcomers" or church saints. In Revelation 6:2 the rider on the white horse wears a *stephanos* crown, in Revelation 9:7 the demon-locusts from the pit wear *stephanos* crowns, and in Revelation 12:1, the woman, who represents Israel, also wears a *stephanos* crown. Clearly these crowns do not exclusively refer to Church saints.

"A third clue lies in their very title of elders. Nowhere else in Scripture is this term used to describe celestial or angelic beings. This term is used of humans in positions of authority either in the synagogue or church." But where did this office of elder originate?

Exodus 25:9

Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

Hebrews 8:5

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." [Exodus 25:40]

Everything in the earthly tabernacle was patterned after the preexisting

heavenly Temple. Did this pattern only encompass the utensils and furnishings of the tabernacle?

1 Chronicles 24:1-4

These were the divisions of the sons of Aaron:

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did, and they had no sons; so Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. With the help of Zadok a descendant of Eleazar and Ahimelech a descendant of Ithamar, David separated them into divisions for their appointed order of ministering. A larger number of leaders were found among Eleazar's descendants than among Ithamar's, and they were divided accordingly: sixteen heads of families from Eleazar's descendants and eight heads of families from Ithamar's descendants.

After Moses received the Torah by the hand of God, his brother Aaron was ordained as High Priest. Aaron had four sons. His oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, were struck dead for offering profane fire before the LORD. Nadab and Abihu had no sons of their own. Aaron's surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, served as priests. They and their male descendants after them served as priests before the LORD from the time that Israel wandered in the wilderness until the time of King David. There were a total of twenty-four heads of families from the tribe of Levi during the days of King David's reign. The regulation of twenty-four courses of priests rotating to minister in the Tabernacle was established in the days when Solomon had the Temple constructed and continued to be observed until the Second Temple was destroyed by Rome in AD 70.

1 Chronicles: 24:19

This was their appointed order of ministering when they entered the temple of the LORD, according to the regulations prescribed for them by their forefather Aaron, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

This appointed order of ministering by rotating among twenty-four priests was commanded by the LORD. When Aaron received the regulations concerning the duties of the Levites, he wrote them down. Generations later, during the time of King David, the tribe of Levi had grown to twenty-four clans. The heads of these tribes served as priests in the Temple according to God's commandment.

Revelation 4:4

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders.

The twenty-four courses of priests serving in the earthly Temple were patterned after the twenty-four priests who minister in the heavenly sanctuary.

Revelation 3:21

To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.

The promise for those who overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony is to sit on the Father's throne.

When the saints are glorified at the rapture, they will not be sitting on 24 thrones around the Father's throne, they will be sitting on the Father's throne.

Revelation 5:11

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

- 1) The heavenly tabernacle was the pattern for the earthly. Therefore the 24 elders, who are a priestly class of angels, were the pattern for the Levitical rotation of priests.
- 2) Angels wear white garments and crowns symbolize authority and position.
- 3) Each heavenly particular of John's vision -- the throne, four living creatures, and millions of angels are interpreted as literal. Therefore, there is no biblical precept for spiritualizing the 24 elders as anything but 24 elders.

Around God's throne are four cherubim, twenty-four elders, and one hundred million angels. The twenty-four elders of Revelation are a priestly order of angels which served as a pattern for the priestly rotation who ministered in Solomon's Temple.

Exodus 25:17-19

"Make an atonement cover of pure gold--two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends.

Everything associated with the earthly tabernacle was patterned after the heavenly sanctuary.

Revelation 4:7

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

The atonement cover or mercy seat was patterned after the heavenly throne.

The golden cherubim were patterned after the living creatures.

1 Chronicles 24:19

This was their appointed order of ministering when they entered the temple of the LORD, according to the regulations prescribed for them by their forefather Aaron, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

The appointed order of ministering was pre (before) scribed (written down) by Aaron.

Who told Aaron to write down the order of ministering? The LORD, the God of Israel commanded him.

Where did the concept of 24 courses of Levitical priests ministering come from?

Hebrews 8:5

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven.

Who served at a sanctuary that was a copy of the heavenly sanctuary?

The 24 courses of Levitical priests.

Revelation 4:4

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders.

The mercy seat was patterned after the Father's throne.

The golden cherubim were patterned after the living creatures.

The 24 courses of Levitical priests were patterned after the 24 elders.

There is a hierarchy of angels. There are angels, archangels, cherubim and seraphim. Each of these classes of angels have different functions. The cherubim surround the throne of the Almighty, the twenty-four elders surround the throne and the cherubim, and beyond the inner circle are a myriad of angels.

Obviously, the 24 elders do not offer up atonement offerings or sacrifices for

sin. But their function is related to the earthly priesthood patterned after them.

The Hebrew word for priest is "kohen" whose etymological root is connected to the Hebrew word "qarab." Qarab means, "draw near."

Since the 24 elders surround the throne, I would conjecture that they have a role related to the priesthood in being able to "draw near" to the throne of God just as Aaron's sons were able to draw near to the divine presence.

Numbers 16:8-10

Moses also said to Korah, "Now listen, you Levites! Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too.

Numbers 16:5

Then he said to Korah and all his followers: "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him.

The three basic elements of the priesthood are furnished from the above verses. They are:

1. Being chosen or set apart by the LORD.
2. Being holy.
3. Being allowed to come near.

Obviously, the 24 elders meet these three criteria of the priesthood!

Revelation 4:1-2

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Revelation 4:4-5.

Who is represented by these twenty-four elders? They cannot be angels. Angels are never seated upon thrones (not seats, as in the Authorized Version), nor are they crowned, nor can they sing redemption's song as the elders do. There is only one possible meaning. They represent the redeemed, the saints in glory.

They are priests (clothed in white) and they are kings (crowned); they are the royal priesthood in the presence of the throne. And why twenty-four? It points us back to the work David did for the temple. He appointed twenty-four courses of the priests (1 Chronicles 24:1-31). Twice twelve would suggest the saints of the Old and New Testaments.

There were lightnings and voices and thunderings. This is repeatedly stated. See Revelation 8:5; Revelation 11:19; Revelation 16:18. It is the symbol of God's throne in its judicial aspect.



The four living creatures, what do these symbolize?

The four living creatures stand for everything that is noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest in nature. Each of them has the pre-eminence in his own particular sphere and world. The lion is supreme among beasts; the ox is supreme among cattle; the eagle is supreme among birds; and man is supreme among all creatures. The lion is the king of beasts, the noblest of them all. The labouring ox is the strongest of beasts. The eagle is the swiftest of all birds. And man is the wisest in all creation.

So, then, the beasts represent all the greatness and the strength and the beauty of nature. Here we see nature praising God. In the verses which are to follow we see the twenty-four elders praising God; and when we put the two pictures together we get the complete picture of both nature and man engaged in constant praise and adoration of God. The ceaseless activity of nature under the hand of God is a ceaseless tribute of praise.

The idea of nature praising God is one which occurs in the Old Testament more than once.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth

knowledge" (Psalm 19:1,2).

"Bless the Lord all His works in all places of His dominion" (Psalm 103.22).

The whole of Psalm 148 is a magnificent summons to the whole of nature to join in praising God.

Night and day the living creatures never rested from their doxology of praise:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, the Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come."

Here there is set out the sleepless praise of nature. As it has been put: "Man rests on the Sabbath, and in sleep, and in the end in death, but the course of nature is unbroken and unbroken in praise."

4:6-11. The four living creatures

Verses 6-8. Their identity

Verses 8-11. Their worship

Revelation 4:6-11.

The sea of glass is a reminder of the great laver in Solomon's temple in which the priests had to wash. Now it is solidified because no more water is needed for the cleansing of the saints. The word "beast" should be changed to "living creatures" or "living ones." They are not symbolical of the Church, or a special class of saints, but they are the same supernatural beings seen in the Old Testament and always in connection with the throne and the presence of Jehovah. They are the cherubim of Ezekiel's great vision, chapters 1 and 10. Their constant cry, "Holy, Holy," reminds us of the seraphim also (Isaiah 6:1-13). The worship here is the worship of Him who is the creator.



Who is Worthy to Open the Seven-sealed Book?

“The purpose of John’s Revelation is to unveil those things that will “rapidly” take place at the end. “Surprisingly, what John now sees in his vision, deals not with what was going to take place on earth but with what was taking place in heaven! The reason for this remarkable focus in Rev 4-5 can be found in the disclosure that the decisions in the heavenly throne room determine the course of human history, such as the rise and fall of human governments, but most of all, the ultimate destiny of the world” and all humanity.

Daniel had pointed to God’s sovereignty over mankind: “He changes times and seasons: He sets up kings and deposes them.’ (Dan 2:21; 4:17; 5:18, 26-28).

Jesus submitted to the brute power of the Roman governor Pilate, but stated, “You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above” (John 19:11).

Rev 5:1,2 And I perceived on the right hand of Him Who is sitting on the throne a scroll, written in front and on the back, and sealed up with seven seals. And I perceived a strong messenger heralding with a loud voice: “Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose its seals?”

“The book or scroll is not literally a ‘book.’ It was applied to a legal document (Matt 19:7, Mark 10:4). This is its probable meaning here, for it is endorsed on the back and sealed like a mortgage ‘according to the law and custom’ which obtained in Israel in ancient times (Jeremiah 32:8-14). What the breaking of the seals involves is clear from the new song of the animals and elders (5:9) when the Lambkin gets the scroll.” Concordant Commentary p 388. The sovereignty of the earth, which has been in large part controlled by Satan, must be transferred back to Christ.

“The divine scroll in Revelation 5 is sealed with seven seals which no one in heaven and earth is worthy to break. This is highly significant. No created

being, either an angel or saint, has the worthiness of the exalted Lord Jesus. Christ alone can disclose the judgments of God, by opening the seals (Rev 6-7), and by the clarifying, subsequent visions of the Apocalypse. Christ thus gives meaning to world history. He has set mankind on course to a goal that God has predetermined in His throne room in heaven.” Ibid.

“In this respect these chapters (Revelation 4-5) constitute the pivot of the structure which holds the book together, for the rest of the visions dovetail into this main structure.”

Verses 3-5 And no one in heaven, nor yet on earth, nor yet underneath the earth was able to open the scroll, neither to look at it. And I lamented much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll, neither to look at it. And one of the elders is saying to me, ‘Do not lament! Lo! He conquers! The Lion out of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, is to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals!’

“There is a fitting parallel with the scroll of Deuteronomy which, as the covenant book, was to be given to a newly crowned king in Israel (see Deut 17:18-20; 2 Kings 11:12).

“With the taking of the scroll, Christ has been committed the lordship over the world (1 Peter 3:22; Phil. 2:9-11). The scroll would then signify the rightful transfer of the kingdom. With the taking of the scroll the whole destiny of humankind is put into the hands of the enthroned Christ; hence it is indeed the heavenly book of destiny. On the basis of its contents He would judge, hence, the judgment book. The Background and Meaning of the Sealed Book of Revelation 5.

Notice that John HEARS the elder telling John that the “Lion out of the tribe of Judah” will open the scroll. Next, John LOOKS! And what does he see?

Verse 6 And I perceived (saw), in the centre of the throne and of the four animals, and in the centre of the elders, A Lambkin (baby lamb) standing, as though slain, having seven horns (ALL strength) and seven eyes (Sees and knows ALL) which are the seven spirits of God, commissioned for the ENTIRE earth.

John HEARS that this individual is a “Lion” and LOOKS and sees that it is a (baby) Lamb! The two are obviously the same. The “Lion” out of the tribe of Judah IS the “Lamb” slain for the sins of the world.

Verse 7,8 And It (the Lambkin) came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him Who is sitting on the throne. And when It took the scroll, the four

animals and the twenty-four elders fall before the Lambkin, each having a lyre, and golden bowls brimming with incenses, which are the prayers of the saints.

“Lambkin, the diminutive form, is used to distinguish it from the usual word lamb (John 1:29,36; Act 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19). It is used only once elsewhere (John 21:15), in contrast to a full-grown sheep. This tender and delicate form adds much to the loving pathos of this prophecy. The utter weakness of a very young Lamb is in striking antithesis to His character as the Lion and to the mighty acts that He performs as a result of His suffering and death. It is in beautiful accord with the new name of His wife, who is now called “the bride.” Youth is renewed in resurrection.” Concordant Commentary, p 388

“Human history with its final judgment is placed in the hands of the risen Lord. Without Christ, world history is an enigma, and without purpose. All heaven, therefore, bursts forth with praise when Christ was declared worthy to receive the divine scroll of destiny.”

Verses 9-10 And they sang a new song, saying,

‘Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open the seals thereof:
For you were slain, and did buy us for God by Your blood.
Out of every tribe and language and people and nation
You also make them a kingdom and a priesthood for our God
And they shall be reigning on the earth.’

The song is a “new” song because the rightful King has now been enthroned. His triumph over sin, Satan, and death on earth is regarded in heaven, as of decisive importance (Phil 2:9-11).

Verses 11,12-13 And I perceived, and I hear a sound as of many messengers around the throne and the animals and the elders, and their number was ten thousand ten thousand and a thousand thousand, saying with a loud voice,

‘Worthy is the Lambkin slain
To get power and riches and wisdom and strength
And honour and glory and blessing!’

Verse 13 And EVERY CREATURE (Universal Restoration) which is in heaven and on the earth and underneath the earth and on the sea, and all in them, I hear also saying,

‘To Him Who is sitting on the throne
To the Lambkin -
Be blessing and honour and glory and might

For the eons of the eons!’

“The choir continues to grow until, finally, John sees ALL creatures in heaven, on earth and under the earth (the dead who have been resurrected), adding their voices to the heavenly choirs in exaltation of both the Father and the Lamb.

“Here Christ receives the cosmic-universal recognition of His deity, because “every creature” worships God AND the Lamb. In John’s vision the circle of worshipers has been constantly enlarged. First the inner circle of seraphs, then were added the twenty-four elders, followed by the countless angels. Finally, the outermost circle of ALL creatures in the universe join the adoration and praise of the majesty of God. This is the ultimate goal toward which history moves and which will be fulfilled in the end. Heaven anticipates this celebration of the reign of God and of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:22-27; 22:1-5). The true followers of Christ today can take heart from this assurance.

Verse 14 And the four animals said, ‘Amen!’ And the elders fell down and worshiped.

“Christ’s acts of breaking the seven seals of the scroll resemble the ritual of the opening of a testament which in Roman culture was closed with seven seals. When a testament was unsealed, it was read aloud before the original witnesses, and then executed.”

Chapter 5

5:1-4. The seven-sealed book

Verse 1. What the book is.

Revelation 5:1-3.

Much has been written about the meaning of the book written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals. What the book contains is no secret whatever. Beginning with the sixth chapter the seals are opened and after they are all broken the contents of the book are made known. The book contains the judgments for this earth preceding His coming in power and glory and the beginning of His reign. It is, therefore, the book of the righteous judgments of God, preceding the glorious manifestation of the King of Kings.

Verses 2-4. Who is worthy to open it?

5:5-10. The one worthy to open the book

Verses 5-6. The Lion of the tribe of Judah

Verses 7-10. His sublime action

5:11-14. Universal worship of the Lamb

Verses 11-12. Worship of the heavenly beings

Verses 13-14. Participation of all creation

Revelation 5:4-5.

John receives the answer to the question the strong angel had proclaimed. One of the elders told him, “Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and the seven seals thereof.” No further comment is needed; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. “The King’s wrath is as a roaring lion” (Proverbs 19:12). He is now to be revealed in mighty power and strength to execute judgment. (See Genesis 49:9.) And He is also the Root of David.

Revelation 5:6-7.

And now He is seen who alone is worthy to open the book. He does not appear as a lion in majesty, but He is seen by John as a Lamb standing, as having been slain. The Lamb slain is the lion. His victory was gained by dying, and, therefore, He must have as the lion the victory over all His enemies. Thrice the number seven is repeated revealing His perfection. Notice especially three descriptions. He is “in the midst.” He is the centre of God’s government and of heaven itself, as He is for His people the centre of all their thoughts and affections. He is seen “as a Lamb standing.” Now He is seated at the right hand of God, but when the time comes when His enemies are about to be made His footstool, He will arise to act. He will arise and have mercy upon Zion (Psalms 102:13). And He is seen as “the Lamb slain.” The Greek word here suggests “slain in sacrifice.”

Revelation 5:8-14.

A great worship scene follows at once. The four living creatures join in with the elders, but the latter alone have harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The harps express their great joy and praise and the bowls full of incense denote the priestly ministry of the redeemed. Such is part of our glorious future, an endless praise of deepest joy, and perfect ministry. The

prayers of the saints are not the prayers of the past, but the prayers of Jewish saints, so beautifully rewritten in the Psalms, when the time of Jacob's trouble is on the earth. And then the new song! This is redemption's song, the song of redeeming love; the old song was the praise of God as the Creator in His glory (Job 38:7). Redemption is now accomplished for the saints in glory; they look forward to the glorious manifestation with Himself and the great new song bursts forth. The praise of Him becomes universe-wide. The innumerable company of angels joins in it. "The number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands." (This is according to the Greek.) And the praise described here leads us on to the time when God will be all in all. It is the never-ending praise, the hallelujah-chorus of redeemed Creation! The four living creatures say "Amen"; the elders worship. Omit "Him that liveth forever and ever." as these words do not belong here.

Chapter 6

6:1-8:5. The Opening of the Seven Seals

1. *The first seal* (Revelation 6:1-2)
2. *The second seal* (Revelation 6:3-4)
3. *The third seal* (Revelation 6:5-6)
4. *The fourth seal* (Revelation 6:7-8)
5. *The fifth seal* (Revelation 6:9-11)
6. *The sixth seal* (Revelation 6:12-17)
7. *Parenthesis: The remnant of Israel* (Revelation 7:1-8)
8. *The saved multitude* (Revelation 7:9-17)
9. *The seventh seal* (Revelation 8:1-5)

6:1-17. Seals one to six

Verses 1-4. Seals one and two

Verses 5-8. Seals three and four

Verses 9-11. Seal five

Verses 12-17. Seal Six

Revelation 6:1-2.

The Lamb, invested with all the authority to execute judgment, having received His commission from God, begins now to open the seals of the book which is in His hands, the hands which were once nailed to the cross. It is evident that the breaking of the seals does not begin till His saints are gathered around the throne in glory. Until then it is still the day of grace. When the first seal is opened one of the living creatures said in voice of thunder, "Come." The words "and see" must be omitted here and in Revelation 6:3; Revelation 6:5 and Revelation 6:7. A rider upon a white horse appears; his is a bloodless conquest. He has a bow, but no arrow. He receives a crown and goes forth to conquer. Many expositors make this rider the Lord Jesus or some power which represents Him. It is positively incorrect. The rider here is a great counterfeit leader, not the personal Antichrist, but the little horn which Daniel saw coming out of the ten-horned beast (Daniel 7:1-28). This coming leader of the revived Roman empire will go forth to conquer and become its political head. He is Satan's man as we shall see later.

Revelation 6:3-4.

The second seal reveals a rider upon a red horse. He takes away the false peace, which the rider upon the white horse as a divine judgment act established. The universal peace of which the world dreams without the presence of the Prince of Peace, will be of short duration. Another awful war follows. It will not be war alone between nation and nation, but it will be a world-wide reign of terror and bloodshed, a carnage unknown before in the history of the world. See in Matthew 24:1-51 how our Lord mentions the great conflict of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

Revelation 6:5-6.

The black horse rider brings famine, exactly what our Lord mentions next in Matthew 24:1-51 : "There shall be famines." Famine follows war and inasmuch as the second seal brings the greatest war, the third seal will bring the greatest famine. The judgments of God fall then on the earth. Our Lord also mentions famines.

Revelation 6:7-8.

The next rider under the fourth seal is named death. And Hades, the region of the unseen (not hell), is populated. Sword, hunger, death, that is pestilences and the beasts of the earth, claim an awful harvest ([Ezekiel 14:21](#)). And so our Lord spoke of "pestilences." These four seal judgments are hardening judgments.

Revelation 6:9-11.

The four living creatures have uttered their four-fold “Come.” They are thus seen in connection with the providential government of the world. Under the fifth seal the scene changes completely. John saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain. And they cry, “How long, O Lord!” Who are they? Not the martyrs of past ages. They are risen from the dead and are in glory with redeemed bodies. The words of the Lord in the Olivet discourse give us the key. Speaking to His Jewish disciples He said: “Then shall they deliver you up, and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name’s sake” (Matthew 24:9).

The Lord speaks of another company of Jewish disciples who will bear a witness during the end of the age, after the rapture of the Church. He will not leave Himself without a witness. He calls a remnant of His people Israel and they bear a witness to the coming of the Messiah, their coming Deliverer and King. Many of them suffer martyrdom. Their cry, “How long?” is the well-known prayer of Jewish saints; and their prayer to have their blood avenged is equally a Jewish prayer. Christians are not supplicating for vengeance on their foes. The prayer for vengeance refers us to the imprecatory psalms prewritten by the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the final persecution of Jewish believers. And the fellow-servants and their brethren, who are yet to be killed ([Revelation 6:11](#)), are the martyrs of that remnant during the final three and one-half years, which is the great tribulation.

Revelation 6:12-17.

Are the things mentioned under this seal to be taken in a literal sense or symbolically? Most of it is symbolical, yet at the same time great physical phenomena are also involved. The earthquake possibly means a literal earthquake. “Earthquakes in diverse places” our Lord predicted. And they increase as the age draws to its close. But the language is symbolical. Everything is being shaken in this poor world. The civil and governmental powers on earth all go to pieces; every class from kings to slaves is affected by it and terrorized. The political and ecclesiastical world is going to pieces. And when these shaking times have come, when thrones fall and anarchy reigns, when the great collapse of civilization and human society has come with signs on earth and in heaven, the earth-dwellers will see in anticipation the approaching day of wrath. Terror fills every breast and those who sneered at prayer, as the Christ-rejectors do now, will gather for a prayer-meeting to appeal to the rocks to cover them. Read the following Old Testament passages in connection with this seal: Isaiah 24:1-23, Isaiah 34:2-4; Joel 2:30-31; Zephaniah 1:1-18; Haggai 2:6-7.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7. First parenthesis

7:1-8. The sealing of Israelites

Verses 1-3. A remnant of Isreal preserved

Verses 4-8. The number of sealed Israelites specified

Revelation 7:1-8.

This is the first parenthesis. It must not be taken chronologically. The six seal judgments extend over the entire period of the ending age. The rider upon the white horse will be on the scene to the end, wars will continue to the end, and culminate in the battle of Armageddon, and so do the famines and pestilences. And the sixth seal brings the end in view. We shall see the correspondence with the seventh trumpet and seventh vial later. The trumpet and vial judgments are more intense and more terrible than the seal judgments. In a certain sense they are parallel; the effect of each is continuously felt. The parenthetical vision of the seventh chapter also covers the entire period of the last seven years and brings before us even the vision of what will be after the great tribulation.

How much confusion would have been avoided if expositors and Christians in searching for the meaning of this vision, had not lost sight of two great facts: 1. This chapter can have no application to the Church on earth, nor to the Church in glory, for the simple reason that the Church is already complete and translated to glory. 2. The vision states clearly that the sealed company is “of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”

The sealed company is of Israel. After the Church is removed to glory, when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in (Romans 11:26) the Lord will turn in mercy to Israel and call, before the judgments fall, a remnant which will also be sealed (See Ezekiel 9:1-11). This remnant is frequently seen on the pages of Old Testament prophecy. This sealed company also bears a great testimony. They are the preachers of the gospel of the kingdom, as a witness to all nations before the end comes (Matthew 24:14). Therefore, during the time when the judgments are executed from above there will be a world-wide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, proclaiming the coming of the King, calling to repentance and faith in His Name, and offering mercy still.

7:9-17. The salvation of Gentiles

Verses 9-14. Elect Gentiles preserved

Verses 15-17. Their kingdom blis assured

Revelation 7:9-17.

The application of this passage of Scripture to the redeemed Church in glory is wrong. This Scripture does not apply to the Church in glory, but to saved Gentiles on earth. It is a company which comes “out of the great tribulation.” The Church enters the glory before that great tribulation begins. The great multitude represents those Gentiles who will hear the final testimony and believe. They will have turned in repentance to Him and will be washed in His precious blood. Our Lord speaks of them in the great judgment of the nations as sheep, who stand at His right hand and inherit the kingdom (Matthew 25:31, etc.). The brethren of our Lord mentioned in Matthew are the remnant of Israel. (For a complete exposition see The Gospel of Matthew, by the author of this volume.) This great company, therefore, does not stand before a heavenly throne, but before the millennial throne on earth. It is a millennial scene after the tribulation is passed.



Chapter 8

8:1-5. The Seventh Seal

Verse 1. Seal seven opened.

Verses 2-5. The prayer of the saints answered

Revelation 8:1-5.

The silence in heaven when the seventh seal is opened is indicative of the solemn things which are now to come. The scroll is now fully opened and there is an ominous hush as the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets of

judgment. John beholds these seven angels, but before they begin to sound “another angel” is seen standing at the altar. This angel is not a creature, but like the angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, is our Lord Himself. He is seen as the Priest in behalf of the praying, suffering saints on earth. No angel can offer the prayers of the saints, but He, who is the one intercessor, alone can do that. And for what do they pray on earth? For mercy for those who persecute the remnant of Israel? No! They pray for divine intervention, for the fire of judgment as Elijah did.





Seven Trumpets Purpose

The purpose of the seven trumpets is to wake up everyone in the world

All around us are signs that the second coming of Jesus is near. But before He comes again the “gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world”. Matthew 24:14.

The problem is the percentage of people on earth who have heard about Jesus and the gospel of His kingdom, is declining. If the current trend continues Jesus will never come again.

God has designed a method to get the attention of each person on earth so that he can hear a clear presentation of the gospel. Then each person will choose whether to worship Jesus or Satan. After the last person has made his final decision then probation will close and Jesus will come the second time.

Many people are too busy to take time to listen to the gospel. Most people are steeped in religion and tradition. Their mindset prevents them from hearing the gospel. Very soon God will interrupt the lives of people on earth and challenge their paradigms. Their minds will be opened. Taking time to hear the everlasting gospel will become a priority.

God will gain the attention of each person by sending great calamities on the earth. These calamities will occur during the seven trumpets found in the book of Revelation.

Worldwide earthquake

Shortly before the seven trumpets sound the people on earth will be shaken

awake by a worldwide earthquake. It will be different than any previous earthquake because it will be felt all around the world. It will be accompanied by noises, thunder and lightning. This earthquake marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Within a few weeks after the first worldwide earthquake the first four trumpets will sound in quick succession:

Trumpet 1

Hail and fire will be thrown to the earth. Fires will be ignited all around the world and 1/3 of the trees and forests will be burned up. All the green fields, crops and grass will be burned up. This devastation may be caused by meteors that rain down on earth. Volcanoes may begin erupting.

Trumpet 2

Something like a great mountain burning with fire is thrown into the sea. 1/3 of the sea will become like blood and 1/3 of the creatures in the sea will die. 1/3 of the ships on the sea will be destroyed. This will include cruise ships, freight ships, fishing boats and pleasure boats. This great mountain may be an asteroid that bursts into flame as it plummets through the earth's atmosphere. It then plunges into the ocean at the speed of 50,000 miles per hour.

Trumpet 3

A giant star drops from the sky, blazing like a torch. It falls on 1/3 of the rivers and on the springs of water. 1/3 of the fresh water on earth becomes bitter. Many people drink the poisoned water and die. This giant star may be another asteroid.

Trumpet 4

1/3 of the sun, moon and stars are darkened. Both the day and the night are affected. The smoke and ejecta from the first three trumpets will darken the air and the sky.

The first four trumpets will destroy buildings, roads, and bridges. Communication and transportation systems will be badly crippled. Our food crops will be destroyed and clean water will be scarce.

People will be terrified and will be asking if God is angry with us. Their minds have been opened to hear the gospel of the kingdom. They will have a desire to know more about God and to be saved from the destruction ravaging the world.

As horrible as the first four trumpets are, they are nothing compared to trumpets 5, 6 and 7. The last three trumpets are called woes because their devastation is so overwhelming.

Trumpet 5 - First woe

Satan and his millions of demons will appear visibly on earth. Satan will appear to be Jesus. Most of his millions of demons will appear to be angels from heaven. Others will appear as people who have died and supposedly gone to heaven. Satan (appearing as Jesus) will claim that he sent the earthquake and the calamities of the first four trumpets so that people will repent and worship him.

For five months he and his demons will inflict pain on people who refuse to worship him. He will offer to remove the pain if they will consent to worship him. He is not allowed to hurt those who have the seal of God on their foreheads.

Trumpet 6 - Second woe

Satan and his demons will combine forces with an army of 200,000,000 people. Together they will kill 1/3 of the people on earth. Billions of people will be slaughtered. This will be the last opportunity for Satan to convince people to worship him and he will stop at nothing to achieve his objective.

Trumpet 7 - Third woe

There is a second worldwide earthquake. It is accompanied by noises, thunder and lightning. There is also a great hailstorm. The kingdom of this world is given to Jesus and He will reign as King of kings forever. The door of mercy in heaven is shut. Human probation ends. People can no longer be converted to Jesus and choose to serve Him. Every person will continue to worship the master he has chosen, either Jesus or Satan.

Just before the first trumpet sounds, 144,000 servants of God will be sealed. During the first six trumpets they will give a clear, powerful presentation of the gospel to the whole world. Jesus will be revealed as a complete Saviour. The 144,000 will present the everlasting gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit. During the chaos and destruction of the trumpets the earth will be lightened with the glory of the God of heaven.

8:6-11:19. The seven trumpets blown

The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets

1. *The first trumpet* (Revelation 8:6-7)
2. *The second trumpet* (Revelation 8:8-9)
3. *The third trumpet* (Revelation 8:10-11)
4. *The fourth trumpet* (Revelation 8:12-13)
5. *The fifth trumpet* (Revelation 9:1-12)
6. *The sixth trumpet* (Revelation 9:13-21)
7. *Parenthesis: The angel and the little book* (Revelation 10:1-11)
8. *The temple* (Revelation 11:1-2)
9. *The two witnesses* (Revelation 11:3-12)
10. *The earthquake and the seventh trumpet* (Revelation 11:13-18)

Trumpets one to four

Verse 7. Trumpet one

Revelation 8:6-7.

The judgments which follow can hardly be fully interpreted at this time. It would be folly to dogmatize about them. The historical application we reject, because the scope of the book makes it clear that these judgments have not yet taken place. What many of these things mean may perhaps never be fully understood till they are actually in fulfillment. The first four trumpet judgments evidently stand by themselves. The fire the Lord cast down is doing its work. The first trumpet manifests the same evidences of divine wrath as came upon Egypt, when Israel suffered there, under the seventh plague ([Exodus 9:23](#)). Hail (heat withdrawn), fire and blood are all symbols of divine wrath. The trees and the green grass were burned up. The green things are symbols of agricultural and commercial prosperity.

Verses 8-9. Trumpet two

Revelation 8:8-9.

That this is not a literal mountain is obvious. A mountain in Scripture language represents a kingdom (Isaiah 2:2; Zechariah 4:7; Psalms 46:2; and especially Jeremiah 51:25). The sea is typical of nations. Some kingdom, internally on fire, signifying probably revolution, will be precipitated into the restless sea of nations, and the result will be a still greater destruction of life and commerce, which is represented by the ships.

Verses 10-11. Trumpet three

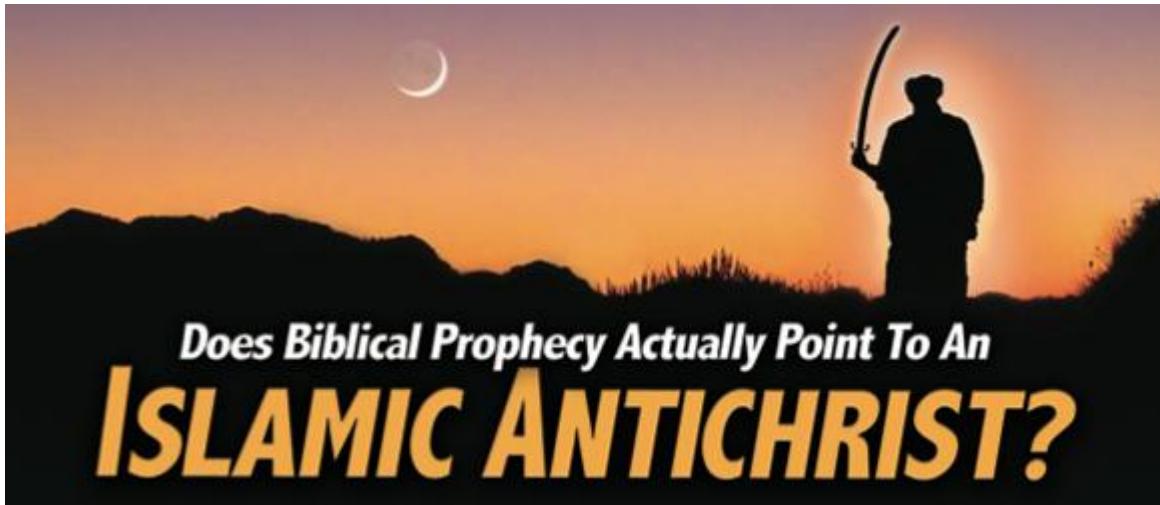
Revelation 8:10-11.

In the preceding trumpet judgments things were cast upon the earth, but here is a star which falls. It is some person who claimed authority and who becomes an apostate, whose fall produces the awful results given here. It may be the final Antichrist who first may have claimed to be for Israel a great teacher with divine authority and then takes the awful plunge. Wormwood is his name and the waters became wormwood and bitter.

Verses 12-13. Trumpet four

Revelation 8:12-13.

The sun, the moon and the stars are now affected. The sun is the symbol of the highest authority; the moon, who has not her own light, is symbolical of derived authority; and the stars are symbolical of subordinate authority. The symbolical meaning of this trumpet judgment is that all authority within the revived Roman empire will be smitten by the hand of one above and as a result there will be the most awful moral darkness. These four trumpet judgments tell of prosperity taken first from the earth; a great power burning with the fires of revolution affecting the nations; a great leader will fall and become wormwood; and authority disowned and smitten will fill the territory of the Roman empire (Europe) with the densest darkness.



Does Biblical Prophecy Actually Point To An **ISLAMIC ANTICHRIST?**

The Islamic State in Biblical Prophecy Revelation 9: The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets

Bible reading in the Book of Revelation, Chapter 9 (KJV 1611)

- 1: And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.
- 2: And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.
- 3: And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.
- 4: And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.
- 5: And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.
- 6: And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.
- 7: And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.
- 8: And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.
- 9: And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.
- 10: And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

11: And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

12: One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13: And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14: Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15: And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16: And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17: And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18: By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19: For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20: And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Revelation 9:1 - The Key

The key to death and the grave is in Christ's hand (Rev. 1:18). This person is therefore an anti-Christ. We note how the locusts who are released from it are specifically obedient to their king-leader (9:4,11).

Revelation 9:1 - The bottomless pit

The idea of course is that if you're thrown into a bottomless pit which is locked, there's no way you can ever get out of it. But locusts, representing the desolators of the land, do arise out of it. The figure is similar to that of receiving a deadly wound, a wound that makes one die, and then resurrecting. This is what is said of the beast and its horn (13:3,12). The locusts are connected to that entity. We should be looking, therefore, for the entity which will finally dominate Israel to receive a wound which apparently makes it dead. This could be from Western and / or Israeli intervention against them. There would then be a brief period of

worldwide relief- the "peace and safety" period of 1 Thess. 5. But the entity then revives. This scenario is possible as we see from the Western conflict against the Islamic State.

So many of Revelation's allusions to the Old Testament are to material specifically concerning Jerusalem. One could almost argue that the prophecy could have a specific application to the latter day city of Jerusalem. The language of the bottomless pit likewise has specific reference to Jerusalem: "In the floor of the small cave (measuring about 14 feet square with a six foot ceiling) under the great foundation stone in the Dome of the Rock is round marble slab closing a well shaft known as "the well of the souls" (Bir al Arwah)... A Muslim tradition holds this is the entrance into the bottomless pit, the abyss. The souls of the dead awaiting judgment are said to be audible beneath. The Talmud claims that this is the abyss above the primeval waters of creation and of the Flood" Lambert Dolphin, *Early History of the Temple Mount*.

The language used here is specifically relevant to latter day Islam. Mawdudi writes of how Muhammed and his message came out of "Arabia- the Abyss of Darkness" (Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, 8th ed. (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: National Offset Printing Press, 1986), p.63).

Revelation 9:2 "A smoke out of the pit"

This is the same figure used in 14:11 for the destruction of the beast worshippers. But here it speaks of what they did to deserve that destruction-their actions against Israel and the land promised to Abraham is the grounds for their condemnation.

Smoke

The Hadith mentions smoke as one of the ten signs that the last day is coming: "Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) came to us all of a sudden as we were (busy in a discussion). He said: What do you discuss about? They (the Companions) said. We are discussing about the Last Hour. Thereupon he said: It will not come until you see ten signs before and (in this connection) he made a mention of the smoke, Dajjal [Antichrist], the beast, the rising of the sun from the west, the descent of Jesus son of Mary (Allah be pleased with him), the Gog and Magog, and landslidings in three places, one in the east, one in the west and one in Arabia at the end of which fire would burn forth from the Yemen, and would drive people to the place of their assembly" (Book 41.6931). Again, we see the crisis in the land in the last days foretold in terms which Moslems will relate to. Sura 44 of the Koran is entitled *Al-Dukhan*, 'The Smoke'. It speaks of

how painful smoke will be the punishment of God's enemies in the last days: "But watch thou [O Muhammad] for the day when the sky will produce visible smoke that will envelop the people. This will be a painful torment. [Then they will say]: Our Lord relieve us of the torment" (Sura 44.10-12). It could be that jihadists bring smoke upon others in an attempt to judge them according to Islam. And they will be judged likewise, drinking the cup they made others to drink. This means that they will be judged as apostates within their own frames of reference.

Furnace

See on Revelation 8:7. The language of Sodom (Gen. 19:28) and Egypt. Both these places are used to describe Jerusalem under domination of her enemies as the place of particular suffering for God's people (11:8).

Revelation 9:3 - Locusts

The locusts of the fifth trumpet act in a very un-locust-like way. Unlike real locusts, they have a king. And, astonishing to relate, they are forbidden to touch grass or any vegetation! Once again the instruction seems to be: "Hurt not the earth, nor the trees"- only on this occasion it is given to locusts. *Akrab* being the Hebrew for scorpion, we may be justified in seeing here an allusion to the word 'Arab', the likely ethnicity of many of the boots on the ground of the last days. :3 The connection between these specific locusts and their place of origin is in line with how the Bible uses plant and animal imagery. "The prophets, when they used symbolical language to denote any events, commonly, at least, employed those which had a local or geographical reference; thus, in the symbols derived from the vegetable kingdom, when Judah is to be symbolized, the olive, the vine, and the fig-tree are selected; when Egypt is referred to, the reed is chosen; when Babylon, the willow. And so, in the animal kingdom, the lion is the symbol of Judah; the wild ass, of the Arabs; the crocodile, of Egypt, etc." (Elliott, *Horae Apoc.* i. 394-406). Being consumed by locusts was one of the punishments upon Israel for their disobedience (Dt. 28:38,42; Ps. 78:46; Joel 1:2). Again, we are to understand this language as specifically applying to Israel. The parallels between Joel and Revelation 8 and 9 are certainly impressive.

	Joel	Revelation
1 Locusts.	1: 4	9:3.
2 Symbolic of a nation.	1:6.	9: 4, 7.
3 Teeth like lions.	1:6.	9:8.
4 Trees and pasture withered and burnt up.	1: 12, 18-20.	8:7.
5 Destruction from the Almighty.	1: 15.	9: 11.
6 Fire.	1: 19; 2:3, 5.	8:7; 9:17.

7 Rivers of waters dried up.	1:20.	8: 10; 9:14
8 Blowing of trumpets.	2:1, 11, 15.	8:6.
9 Darkness.	2:2.	9:2.
10.Horses.	2:4.	9:7, 9.
11.Chariots.	2:5.	9:9.
12.Torment.	2:6.	9:6.
13.Earthquake.	2:10.	8: 5.
14.Sun, moon, and stars darkened.	2:10, 31; 3:15.	8:12, 9:2.
15.“Turn ye to me ... “	2:12.	9:20, 21.
16.The locust army goes back into the abyss.	2:20.	9:1.
17.Deliverance for the faithful remnant.	2:32.	9:4.

Locusts in Joel

Joel's prophecy is full of reference to the army of locust-horses which invade Israel in conjunction with the Palestinians (Joel 3:4), resulting in the repentance of a remnant who stand on Mount Zion (Joel 2:32), the destruction of the northern invader [another term for the locust army] after their holy war [jihad, Joel 3:9], and then the final establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. He describes the invading army in Joel 2 in terms of a locust swarm, and they come to their end as locust swarms often do in Israel- in the Dead Sea and Mediterranean. In more detail, Joel 3:2,12 speaks of a final conflict in the valley of Jehoshaphat, when the Gentiles "round about" Israel are gathered together and judged- spoken of in Revelation 16 as the battle of Armageddon (which likewise is primarily concerning the peoples "round about" Israel rather than the whole planet). The degree of damage done to the land and people of Israel was limitable- if Judah repented. Hence the frequent appeals for repentance. This prophecy could have had potential fulfilment in the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions of Judah; but the prophecy is alluded to in Revelation and in other latter day prophecies, as if it has specific and complete fulfilment in the last days. The overall context is exactly as presented in Revelation- the seal judgments appeal for Israel's repentance, the minority who respond are the symbolic 144,000 who stand on mount Zion; and then there are the trumpet and vial judgments, which are full of allusion back to Joel. The frequent appeals for repentance mention the possibility that the program of judgment and desolation can be limited- if Judah repent. And finally, Joel speaks of the establishment of God's Kingdom and physical restoration of the decimated land, into the wonder of God's Kingdom on earth at Christ's return. Joel opens by saying that the destruction of the land he was burdened to portray had no parallel in the past, and the Jews would tell their children of it and the account of it would be passed down throughout future history (Joel 1:2,3). This is another way of saying that this prophecy is about a time of trouble for Israel such as never was, and never

will be in the future. And that is precisely the language of the Lord Jesus, Jeremiah and Daniel about the latter day tribulation of Israel.

The Arabs and Muhammed have a unique connection to the locust: "In the Bedoween romance Antar, the locust is introduced as the national emblem of the Ishmaelites [one of the ancestors of the Arabs –DB]. And it is a remarkable coincidence that Muslim tradition speaks of locusts having dropped into the hands of Muhammed, bearing on their wings this inscription – 'We are the army of the Great God.'"

Revelation 9:4 - Have not the seal of God

They also don't have His seal. So perhaps we are intended to read in an elipsis: 'Have not [received] the seal of God'. The idea would then be that those who have not responded to the appeal to repent (as a result of the seal judgments) are targetted.

"Not hurt the grass"

There are many allusions in this section to the anatomy and style of the locust; the highlighted difference here with locusts [who usually eat up the grass] is therefore intentional. The people represented by the locusts were therefore going to be made to act uncharacteristically due to the charismatic individual controlling them. The reason for this is because these locusts have a king-which, again, locusts typically do not (see on *king over them*).

Carl Friedrich Keil (26 February 1807 – 5 May 1888) was a conservative German Lutheran Old Testament commentator, in his work on Joel 2 describes the geographical origins of the locusts which descend upon Israel: "Swarms of locusts come from south, west, north, and east. Their home is not confined to the desert of Arabia, but they are found in all the sandy deserts, which form the southern boundaries of the lands that were, and to some extent still are, the seat of cultivation, viz., in the Sahara, the Libyan desert, Arabia, and Iraq; and Niebuhr saw a large tract of land, on the road from Mosul to Nisibis, completely covered with young locusts. They are also met with in the Syrian desert, from which swarms could easily be driven to Palestine by a north-east wind... Such a swarm as this might be called the *tsephōnī*, i.e., the northern one, or northerner [Joel 2:20], even if the north was not its true home". These are the very areas from where jihadist fighters are emerging in their tens of thousands, and uniting together to establish an Islamic state and destroy Israel. This geographical connection cannot be merely coincidental!

Concerning trees and vegetation, the Koran says: "When you fight the battles of the Lord... destroy no palm trees, nor burn any fields of grain. Cut down no fruit trees..."

Revelation 9: 5 - It was given

We are surely to read in the elipsis, that a commandment was given to them. And it is jihadist Islam which forbids damaging trees and plants during military campaigns.

Not kill them

As locusts don't usually cause death but rather suffering.

Tormented

The same word used about Babylon (18:7,10,15) and the beast worshippers being "tormented" (14:10). The language of torment is not, therefore, reflective of an angry God being mean to sinners. Rather will they drink the cup they gave others to drink.

Five months

It could be argued that the book of Revelation will 'come alive' during the three and a half year tribulation in the land, and it's possible that this is a literal period. In any case, it is based around the fact that the season for locusts is five months, from May to September. Five months is their lifespan, so the idea may be that at the end of it they too will come to their end.

Revelation 9:6 - Seek death

Surah 75:10,11 speaks in similar terms of the final judgment of the condemned: "On that day man will cry: Whither to flee! Alas! No refuge!". Islamists will therefore seek to do this to the Jews whom they believe it is their duty to condemn, and in turn they will drink the same cup, seeking death but not finding it (Revelation 9:6).

Revelation 9:7 Like unto horses

Clearly the locusts represent fighters charging to war. The Arab Bedouin call locusts *Farras el Jundy*, 'soldiers' horses'. The description of these horsemen from the East accurately fits the Parthians, who were massed to the East of the Roman empire. There was much angst amongst the Romans of the first century

as to whether the Parthians would invade; they did not. But the similarity is explained if we accept that Revelation is open to many possible fulfilments. It could have all happened in the first century, and God moved the players into place. But due to human failure, the whole scenario was delayed to our last days. "Like unto" continues the idea that John is seeing in outline form something he finds hard to describe, and he keeps likening the vision to things he is familiar with. Hence "As...as... like unto... as it were". This is understandable if he saw modern military hardware.

Prepared unto battle

This is the process we see ongoing around us. The Joel allusions encourage us to see this as Joel 3:9: "Prepare war, wake up the mighty men". The gathering of thousands of fighters to support an Islamic State in the land promised to Abraham is surely the fulfilment of this.

Like gold

The *stephanos* may suggest they are victorious, for a brief period, over the land. But John saw their appearance *like* this. Turbans as worn by Moslems today were not used in his day. If he saw, as I suggest, hordes of latter day Moslems streaming into Israel to proclaim a radical Islamic state, then this is how he would've described them- wearing something like a *stephanos*. The Greek literally means something wrapped around the head. This is the picture of Moslem turbans and jihadist headgear. The Hadith records Mohammed as saying "And turbans are the crowns of Arabs". "Like gold" means he saw a yellow colour. Perhaps this group of jihadists will have yellow headgear or turbans? According to Suyuti's Commentary on the Koran, there are Hadith which make this association: "Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr: The latter was wearing a yellow turban on the day of Badr, so the angels descended wearing yellow turbans... the Prophet himself came wearing a yellow turban... The day of Badr the angels came down on piebald horses, wearing yellow turbans"

Revelation 9:8 "Hair as the hair of women"

The long hair of the jihadist fighters.

Teeth of lions

The quotation from Joel 1:6 means that these forces will be a latter day Babylon or Assyria invading Israel. Lions are a common OT symbol of Babylon-Assyria, the historical prototype of Israel's latter day invader.

Revelation 9:9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron

Another allusion to how the locust has a firm and hard cuticle on the forepart of the breast, which serves for a shield or defence. ““Breastplates of iron” speak of the Arabs’ armour. The poem *Antar* makes at least four references to a warrior’s cuirass or breastplate. The Koran says, “God hath given you coats of mail to defend you in your wars” ...”

And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle –

Alluding to the noise made by locust swarms. They are similar to chariot horses in that the locust's head is similar to that of a horse. The locusts of Joel 1 which invade Israel are also described as war horses in Joel 2:4-6: "Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle". The similarity with locusts is in the springing motion of chariots on mountain paths. This was surely the first century way of trying to express helicopter gunships and other modern military technology advancing into the land promised to Abraham in final judgment. Joel 2:8 speaks of how this locust army will not be deterred by weaponry: "they fall headlong through weapons [*shelach* means literally a missile], and do not cut themselves in pieces". The greatest missiles and military technology of the IDF and the West will be unable to restrain their ever forward march into the land. Currently, it is superior weaponry that enables Israel to survive and the West to control the jihadists. But the picture of the locust swarm is that absolutely no weapon can stand in their way. Perhaps it is by sheer force of suicidal numbers that the jihadists win- and thousands of Moslems are already flocking to Syria and Iraq to enlist in this great army. In Joel 2, the locust army attacks because Judah failed to respond to the call to repent made in Joel 1. But even at that late stage there is the possibility of repentance: "Yet even now, is the saying of Jehovah, turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). This fits the context of the trumpets admirably. The seal judgments in Revelation 6 appealed for repentance; those few who respond, the symbolic 144,000, are sealed and stand on Mount Zion; and then the trumpet judgments come. But even then there is the chance of repentance, so that God would leave behind a blessing, i.e. the harvest-produce which could be used for a meat offering and drink offering (Joel 2:14)- even though this had "all" been destroyed by the locusts (Joel 1:9, 13). And as a result of this, a remnant of repentant Jews are likewise pictured by Joel standing on Mount Zion (Joel 2:32).

Chariots

The reference is also to the language of the cherubim chariots; Ez. 10:5 is the only other place in the Bible where we read of the sound of wings as chariots are in motion. The invaders will be led by the Angels, just as the locust army of Joel 2 is described in terms of the irresistible march of the Angels. But there may also be the hint that the invaders see themselves as a cherubic system, continuing the theme of the anti-Christ being an imitation Christ.

Revelation 9:10 Tails like unto scorpions... stings in their tails

At first blush, this appears to not be true to the figure of locusts. But Smith's "Bible Dictionary" gives a picture of "a species of locust, the *Acridium Lineola*, a species commonly sold for food in the markets of Baghdad, which has a sting in the tail". We may infer that these symbolic locusts come from Iraq, specifically from the area of the Euphrates. This is in harmony with the later picture within this same chapter of hordes of attackers swarming into the land promised to Abraham from the same area- the Euphrates. The only other reference to a "tail" in the NT is in Rev. 12:4, where the dragon uses his tail to cast down one third of the stars. It could be that we are being shown part of the same process here.

To hurt men

Significantly, the same word is used in Lk. 10:19 about how those who are preaching the Lord Jesus will not be hurt by scorpions. This is the context here- these trumpets are part of the judgments which will be restrained from falling upon those who have responded to the seal judgments, the symbolic 144,000. The same word is used in 7:2,3 of how the 144,000 will not be "hurt". And chapters 10-15 teach that the resistant believers at this time will be engaged in witnessing to Jesus.

Five months: See on Revelation 9:5.

Revelation 9:11 They had a king over them

Proverbs 30:27 observes that locusts have no king. The picture presented is of an unusual and uncharacteristic unity of the locusts under the leadership of a "king" or caliph. This is what students of latter day prophecy are taught by the image's toes of Daniel 2. The components of the final entity to abuse Israel are divided, but uncharacteristically united in their domination of Israel. This will be brought about by the locusts having a king- just as the disparate materials of the image are united in the form of a man, a latter day Nebuchadnezzar.

The Angel of the bottomless pit

This presumably is the same as the fifth Angel, who opened the pit at the beginning of this section. As in Daniel, so here, the Angel refers both to an Angel in the court of Heaven, and to the person on earth whom that Angel represents before God. Again we see how that even the terrible individual on earth spoken of here is in fact represented in the court of Heaven and under the control of God's Angel. The allusion is to the destroying Angel of the Passover deliverance (Ex. 12:23; 1 Cor. 10:10). The Angel comes in judgment upon the Egyptians and also upon any unfaithful Israelites who would not trust in the blood of the Lamb; hence all the allusions to the plagues on Egypt here in the trumpet judgments. The locusts unleashed by the destroyer Angel therefore come forth to punish people for what they did to God's people Israel, and also to punish those of Israel who will not trust in the blood of the Lamb / Jesus.

In Hebrew... Greek

The two languages are perhaps mentioned because both Jews and non-Jews in the land suffer from this invasion.

Apollyon

This is the noun from the verb *apollumi*. Luke 21:18 says that not a hair of the faithful will be *apollumi* in the latter day tribulation, and this is clearly what the Apollyon Angel is responsible for.

Revelation 9:12 - One woe is past; behold there come two woes more

This could seem relatively pointless information, until we perceive that the idea is to appeal for repentance, even now at a time when the window for repentance provided by the six seals and sealing process of chapter 7 has already passed. I have mentioned earlier that the third of the three woes never seems to happen—perhaps because there is repentance, or because God's mercy is such that He restrains the final destruction. Or perhaps the third woe is the pouring out of the bowls of final destruction upon the beast and impenitent.

Revelation 9:13 - A voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God

This is the incense altar, and the voice suggests that the combined prayers of the faithful bring forward the execution of God's purpose, causing Angels in Heaven to sound and do things on the earth / land. The words / voice of those prayers really is "before God". This an attempt to relay the degree to which human

words in prayer really are rehearsed before God's very presence, and result in a word of command appropriate to the word of those prayers.

Revelation 9:14 - Saying to the sixth Angel –

The voice of prayer is effectively a voice of command to Angels resulting in dramatic action upon the earth / land, and in this case, the loosing of restraining Angels.

Loose the four Angels

See Revelation chapter 4, The Significance of the Euphrates Revelation 9:15

Revelation 9:15 -Prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year

Vine correctly observes: "This rendering is wrong, since it conveys the idea that the four periods mentioned are to be combined as representing the length of the preparation or of the continuance of the plague. But it is to be noted that neither the article nor the preposition are repeated before day and month and year. The meaning is that the angels are prepared unto the hour appointed by God, and that this hour shall fall in its appointed day and month and year". The parallel is with how the locust-horses are "prepared" [s.w.] unto the final battle. It is this specific battle which is the final date in view here in :15. The way of the kings from the East is likewise "prepared" (16:12 s.w.).

To slay the third part of men

This 'slaying' could be understood as a ritual slaughter [*apokteino*]. The fact it is done at a particular hour on a particular date and year may mean that there is some kind of religious relevance of the exact time of their slaughter; and that the men are slain at the same "hour", suggesting a specific ritual, organized slaughter rather than the gradual killing of people in the process of war or domination of the land. This kind of thing is imaginable in an Islamic state.

Revelation 9:16 - I heard the number of them

The very words used about the 144,000 in 7:4. The contrast is made between the sealed 144,000 and this far larger group of their opponents, 200,000,000. The figures are surely not to be taken literally, rather is the idea that the opponents of the faithful are far more, and are as it were a fake imitation of the faithful, just as the anti-Christ is a fake imitation of the true Christ. This concept fits admirably with Islamist theology, as they consider themselves as the descendants of Ishmael to be the true seed of Abraham, and Isaac to be as the Bible presents

Ishmael [the roles of Isaac and Ishmael are switched around in the Koran; Moslems believe that it was Jewish scribes who switched the roles to how they are in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)].

Revelation 9:17 - Fire... jacinth and brimstone

These are to be connected with the three methods by which the third part of men are killed in :18, fire, smoke and brimstone. The third of men are perhaps divided into thirds, and each killed by a different method. Or it may be that the third part of men are killed by a combination of these three factors. I suggested on :15 that this may be a ritual slaughter, performed at a specific "hour" on a carefully chosen specific date of religious significance. "Jacinth" means 'deep blue'; there may be some specific means by which fire, deep blue and sulphur [brimstone] are used in the destruction process. We are therefore to expect some form of technology which uses these three elements or appearances in order to effect the mass destruction of a large number of people in one hour. The way Babylon's destruction likewise comes in "one hour" would therefore match this; Babylon must drink the cup she gave others to drink.

Another approach is to recall that the fire and jacinth come out of the breastplates of these fighters; and yet jacinth [hyacinth] is also one of the stones on the priestly breastplate. In this case we are invited to see these fighters acting as fake High Priests, which would connect with the undoubted theme of 'anti-Christ'- the Islamic fighters acting as if they are the true Israel of God. We note that in the last day, God will put on the breastplate of judgment against His enemies (Is. 59:17). Sulphur and fire have associations with Divine judgment; these people will therefore believe that they are executing God's judgments for Him. This is precisely the spirit of radical Islam.

Revelation 9:20 Yet repented not

Again we note that even now at the time of the trumpet judgments, there is the desperate desire that some still repent; even though after the seal judgments, there was a sealing of those who had responded and a shielding of them from the judgments which were to come upon the impenitent.

Idols of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood

The allusion is clearly to Daniel 5:4,23, where the very same materials are mentioned as being the idols of Babylon. In the context, the final king of Babylon has been asked to repent in that he had been asked to learn the lesson of his father Nebuchadnezzar, who was smitten with madness and turned into an animal. But Nebuchadnezzar revived from that deadly wound, as it were. It

could be that the final leader of the entity known as Babylon is intended to repent because the previous leader was struck down by God, as Nebuchadnezzar had been. But because he didn't repent, he was judged. The appeal of Daniel to him in the very last minutes of his life is therefore to be seen as the equivalent of this final appeal to the leader of Babylon through the trumpet judgments. The 'division' of his kingdom in judgment (Dan. 5:28) perhaps recalls the divided state of the toes of the image just before Christ comes to destroy them. The fifth trumpet began with mention of the opening of a bottomless pit, which I suggested is parallel to the deadly wound of the beast. The reason for this is so that the deadly wounding will be an opportunity for repentance- this deep Divine desire for human repentance, even amongst His worst enemies, is so clearly portrayed in the structure of this apocalyptic. Nebuchadnezzar's 'wound' was intended to elicit repentance in the final king of Babylon. Hence the allusion to that scenario here in the sixth trumpet.

Which can neither see, hear nor walk

This again is a quotation from Daniel 5:28. The similarity with the fall of Babylon is clearly intended. And what was particularly obnoxious about the king of Babylon at that time was that he was using the temple vessels in a drunken idol ritual; this in outline terms is the same as placing an abomination on the temple mount, which will be the reason for his desolation. The reference to "sorceries" (Revelation 9:21) is likewise an allusion to the practices of the historical Babylon and Assyria (Isaiah 47:9,12; Nahum 3:4). Such things were the calling card of Jezebel, the prototype of the whore who rides the beast (2 Kings 9:22). Note she was from Tyre, in modern day Lebanon. We may well enquire how idol worship and sorcery could be part of a radical Islamic state, seeing they are passionately against such things. The point is that this latter day entity is being cast in terms of the historical Babylon; and for all Islam's protest against idolatry and sorcery, from God's viewpoint, these are the very things they are guilty of.

Revelation 9:21 - Murders... fornication... thefts

This sounds very much the behaviour of jihadist fighters, murdering and thieving, and sexually abusing those whom they conquer (witness the Islamic State's treatment of Yezidi and Christian women whom they captured and declared as their 'spoils of war').

We observe that both the people being judged, as well as those judging them, can easily be interpreted as radical Islamist fighters. But this turning upon themselves is what we expect, both from Bible prophecy (e.g. regarding the divided state of the toes of the image in Daniel 2) and from Divine historical

precedent. For His preferred method of destroying Israel's enemies has been through making them turn upon each other, rather than direct bolts from Heaven.

Sorceries

We only meet this word again in Rev. 18:23, speaking of the sorceries of latter day Babylon. This trumpet therefore speaks of the judgment upon latter day Babylon. The LXX uses the word not only of Babylon (Is. 47:9,12) but also of Egypt at the time of the plagues (Ex. 7:22). And the trumpet judgments are full of reference to the plagues upon Egypt.

Chapter 9

9:1-12. The fifth trumpet – the first woe

Verse 1. The abyss opened

Verses 2-12. The loosing of myriads of demons

Revelation 9:1-12.

The remaining three trumpets have a “woe” attached to each. This is announced in the last verse of the preceding chapter, where the word angel should be “eagle.” An eagle, the bird of prey, proclaims the threefold woe. He acts thus as a herald of great judgments (Matthew 24:28, Revelation 19:17-18). The fifth trumpet is a special judgment upon apostate Israel: because those who suffer are they “which have not the seal of God on their foreheads” (Revelation 9:4). The great tribulation in the second half of the week, comes now into prominence. If we turn to Revelation 12:12 we read something similar to the eagle’s message of woe. “Woe unto the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

Preceding the sounding of the fifth trumpet the eagle proclaimed the woe upon the inhabitants of the earth. The star which is seen fallen from heaven with the key of the pit of the abyss is Satan himself cast out of heaven. The details of this event we learn in the twelfth chapter. He has the key to the pit of the abyss, the same word “deep,” used in Luke 8:31. “And they (the demons) besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep (abyss).” He unlocks the prison house of the fallen angels and the most awful satanic agencies come forth to begin their “dread” work of torment. The smoke first, symbolical of darkening; the locusts next, symbolical of these demon powers. Awful darkness prevails and the most diabolical delusions, producing fearful torments among apostate Israel and the inhabitants of the earth. It is the time of the strong delusion

(2 Thessalonians 2:4-11) which has come. And over them is a king. His name is given in Greek and Hebrew, showing that it is both Jew and Gentile that come under His power. Both names mean destruction.

9:13-21. The sixth trumpet – the second woe

Verses 13-19. Gathered armies loosed

Verses 20-21. The purpose of the woe

Revelation 9:13-21.

The sixth angel is commanded by a voice from the horns of the golden altar to loose the four angels who are found at Euphrates, and as a result an innumerable company of horsemen is released. (Greek: twice ten thousand times ten thousand, that is, 200 million. The number would indicate the immense, uncountable hordes.) They are prepared for a specific time to do their work. Euphrates is once more mentioned under the pouring out of the sixth vial. We believe the sixth vial judgment gives the key to these horsemen here. Euphrates does not mean the Turkish Empire, as we shall more fully show when we come to the sixth vial. This river was both the boundary line of the old Roman Empire and the land of Israel. Restraining influences held back the tide of nations on the other side of the river, this restraint is now removed and therefore a great invasion takes place. As the land of Israel is nearest it will suffer first, but the revived Roman empire will be the objective of these invading hordes. The “third part” stands for the Roman Empire, the coming European confederacy. This invasion is under the king of the north. It is seen in its beginning here and is consummated under the sixth vial. There the “kings of the sunrise” are included. And under the sixth vial they are more specifically gathered for the great day of God Almighty.





The Little Scroll

THE MIGHTY ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE SCROLL REVELATION 10

There was an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal judgments that presented the faithfulness and mercy of God in the midst of judgment (Rev. 7). There is also an interlude that is placed between the sixth and seventh trumpet judgments (Rev. 10). We must never forget that even in the darkest days of judgment our God is a God of faithfulness and mercy.

I. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ANGEL. 10:1-4.

A. The Identity of the Angel.

1. Some think the angel is Christ. Cp. Rev. 1:12-16.
2. Others think this angel is an angel and not the Lord.

* The word “another” (*allos*) denotes another of the same kind. This messenger is like the other angels. *

B. The Description of the Angel.

1. Clothed with the cloud of God's glory. Ex. 40:34.
 2. Adorned with the rainbow of God's mercy. Gen. 9; Rev. 4.
 3. Possessed a fact that radiated with glory.
 4. Had feet that spoke of greatness and glory.
 5. Held a little scroll in his right hand.
- C. The Command of the Angel.
1. The great authority of this angel.
 - a. One foot on land another on sea compassing all the earth.
 - b. A loud voice as the sound of a lion roar.
 2. The message of the seven thunders.
 - a. Thunders speak of power and judgment. See Rev. 4:5; 8:5.
 - b. This tells us that the judgments described in the seals, trumpets and vials are not all the judgments that will fall on earth during the tribulation.
 - c. The message of the seven thunders is the only concealed message in Revelation.

II. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE END. 10:5-7.

- A. The Formality of the Announcement. 10:5-6a.
1. His hand is raised to take a solemn oath.
 2. He swears by the one true God.
 - a. The eternal God.
 - b. The creator God. Cp. Rev. 4:11.
- B. The Content of the Announcement. 10:6b-7.
1. The completion of God's judgment will soon be completed.
 2. The answer to the saint's prayers will soon be fulfilled. Rev. 6:9-11; Matt. 6:10.

III. THE EATING OF THE SCROLL. 10:8-11.

- A. The Significance of the Scroll. 10:8,9.
1. The scroll contains the fulfillment of God's judgment which ushers in the fulfillment of God's promises.
 2. The message of the scroll must be assimilated by the messenger of God. Ezek. 3:1-3.
- B. The Taste of the Scroll. 10:10,11.
1. Sweet as honey to his mouth.

* Wonderful to know that the plan of God will be fulfilled and righteousness will

prevail. *

2. Bitter in his stomach.

* As the message of God's judgment penetrated his soul, John realized the tragedy of man undergoing the judgment of God. *

Revelation 10 reminds us that in the darkest days God is still the sovereign ruler of the universe. His plans and purposes will be fulfilled. One day judgment will be over and righteousness will reign forever and ever.

(10:1-11:13. Second parenthesis)

Chapter 10

10:1-7. The angel and the little scroll

Verses 1-6. The identity of the mighty angel

Verse 7. The mystery of God fulfilled

10:8-11. John and the little scroll

Verses 8-10. What the little scroll is

Verse 11. Its effect on John's ministry

Revelation 10:1-11.

The proclamation of the mighty angel is the first recorded event in this parenthesis. Who is this angel? It is Christ Himself. We saw our Lord in angel's form before the opening of the seventh seal and then He appeared in priestly dignity. Here before the sounding of the seventh trumpet He appears again in the same form, but He is called a mighty angel and we behold Him in royal dignity. The cloud, the rainbow, the face like the sun, His right foot upon the sea, the left on the earth, the voice like a lion and the seven thunders, all declare this to be correct. The hour is rapidly approaching when the kingdoms of this earth are to become His kingdom. This is seen under the seventh trumpet. And, therefore, He is seen now in this attitude of royal dignity. The words which He speaks (Revelation 10:6-7) bear out this interpretation. "There shall be no longer delay." Man's day is about to close. The mystery of God is now to be finished, "as He hath declared to His servants, the prophets"; or in better rendering "the mystery of God also shall be completed according to the good tidings which He

declared by His own servants, the prophets.” How great has been that mystery! Evil had apparently triumphed; the heavens for so long had been silent. Satan had been permitted to be the god of this age, deceiving the nations. And Israel, too, is included in this mystery. And now the time has come when the mystery of God will be completed, when the glorious messages, the good tidings of the prophets concerning Israel’s blessing and the kingdom, will be fulfilled.

But what is the little book which the angel holds in His right hand? It is not a sealed book, but open. It stands for the prophecies in the Old Testament relating especially to Israel during the time of the great tribulation, which is yet to come upon the earth, culminating in the personal and glorious appearing of the Lord to begin His millennial reign.

The End of Times of the Gentiles

In Luke 21:24, Jesus speaks of future events, including the destruction of Jerusalem and His return. He says that “Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (ESV). A similar phrase is found in Romans 11:25, which says “a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (ESV). Does the Bible tell us what the phrase “times of the Gentiles” means?

The Old Testament does not contain this exact phrase, but there are references which seem to match up. Ezekiel 30:3 points to “a time of doom for the nations” in connection with the Day of the Lord. Daniel’s series of visions deals with Gentile world powers and their role in God’s plan for the earth. Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay (Dan 2:31-45) represents successive Gentile kingdoms which will dominate until Christ returns and establishes His reign. Daniel’s vision of the four beasts (7:1-27) likewise speaks of four kings, or nations, which will dominate for a time, until Christ comes to rule forever. The vision of the ram and the goat (Dan 8:1-26) gives more detail about these Gentile rulers and the time involved in their dominion. In each of these passages, the Gentiles have dominion over the world, including the Jewish people, for a time, but God will ultimately subdue them all and establish His own kingdom once and for all. Each prophecy culminates with a reference to Christ’s kingdom, so the “times” of these Gentile rulers would be all the years between the Babylonian Empire of Nebuchadnezzar and the glorious return of Christ to establish His kingdom. We are now living in “the times of the Gentiles,” that is, in the era of Gentile domination.

When we examine the book of Revelation, we find similar references to the time of Gentile dominion ending with the return of Christ. In Revelation 11:2, John indicates that Jerusalem will be under Gentile rule, even though the temple

has been restored. The armies of the Beast are destroyed by the Lord in Revelation 19:17-19, just before the millennial reign of Christ is initiated.

Looking again at Luke 21:24, we see that Jesus mentions a time in which Jerusalem is under the dominion of Gentile authority. Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem in 588 B.C. began that period, and it has continued through the present time. Romans 11:25 gives us a hint as to God's purpose in the times of the Gentiles: the spread of the gospel throughout the whole world. The organization and inventions of the pagan world powers have actually aided the evangelism of the world. For example, in the first century, it was the widespread use of the Greek language and the network of Roman roads that allowed many people in far-off lands to hear the gospel.

One theme of Romans 11 is that, when the Jewish people rejected Christ, they were temporarily cut off from the blessings of a relationship with God. As a result, the gospel was given to the Gentiles, and they gladly received it. This partial hardening of heart for Israel doesn't preclude individual Jews from being saved, but it prevents the nation from accepting Christ as Messiah until His plans are finished. When the time is right, God will restore the entire nation, and they will come to faith in Him once again, ending "the times of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 17:7; 62:11-12; Romans 11:26).

Chapter 11

11:1-2. The end of the times of the Gentiles

Verses 1-2a. Restoration of temple worship

Verse 2b. End of the times of the Gentiles

Revelation 11:1-2.

We see at once how Jewish things come now into view. To apply these verses to the Church and make the temple the Church is absolutely wrong. The temple and the altar are Jewish; the holy city is Jerusalem. After the Church has left the earth the Jewish people will be fully restored to their own land, and their land restored to them. They will possess Jerusalem once more. When the Jews are once more masters in their own promised land they will erect another temple and then restore the Levitical worship as far as it is possible. Such a temple must be in Jerusalem. (See Isaiah 66:1-4.) In that temple the personal Antichrist, the beast out of the land of whom we shall read in chapter 13, will appear and claim divine worship. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.) Apostate Israel in corrupt alliance

with equally apostate Gentiles is seen in the opening verses of this eleventh chapter, as the court without the temple. But in the midst of this corrupt mass, which will follow the delusion of the Antichrist and accept Satan's man as their Messiah, there will be the God-fearing remnant. This remnant is here divinely recognized as worshippers. Therefore that coming is called "the temple of God," because the Lord owns the true worshippers found in the midst of the unbelieving mass.

11:3-13. The two witnesses

Verses 3-7. Their identity

Verses 8-13. Their destiny

Revelation 11:3-12.

Much has been written on these two witnesses who will appear in Jerusalem. It is clear they are still future and their work will be in that city. Some make them Enoch and Elijah and others think they will be Moses and Elijah returned in person. Some have claimed to be a reincarnation of Elijah. Such claims are fanatical. No second coming of Moses is anywhere promised in the Word. Something, however, is said about the work of Elijah in the future (Malachi 4:5-6). But the words of our Lord in Matthew 11:14, speaking of John the Baptist, and Matthew 17:12, seem to make clear that no literal coming of the same Elijah, who went into glory, without dying, is meant. Yet the deeds of these two witnesses clearly link them with the work of Moses and Elijah. They each do both the things Moses and Elijah did separately. We take it then that these two witnesses represent the great testimony to be given in Jerusalem during the 1,260 days of the great tribulation. Perhaps the leaders will be two great instruments, manifesting the spirit of Moses and Elijah, endowed with supernatural power, but a large number of witnesses is unquestionably in view here. They maintain in the midst of the Satanic scenes a powerful testimony for God.

The period of the great tribulation was mentioned in Revelation 9:2. Here for the first time the beast is mentioned. This beast coming out of the pit of the abyss, the deep, is the revived Roman empire under the little horn, seen by Daniel on the four-horned beast (Daniel 7:8). While he dominates over the Gentiles, he will turn in fury against these Jewish saints, and the two witnesses will be slain. He makes war with the godly remnant (Daniel 7:21). A part of that remnant will be killed. The vileness of these coming days of Satan's rule on earth is seen in the treatment of the bodies of Jehovah's servants. The wicked are so elated over the silencing of the testimony that they refuse to permit their burial so that they may feast their eyes upon the sickening spectacle. They rejoice and make it a

festive occasion, because torment had come to their consciences through the testimony of the slain.

Gentiles, who side with apostate Israel are mentioned, but especially a class which is called “they that dwell on the earth” rejoices over the end of the witnesses. The same class is mentioned several times. Study the passages where they are mentioned: Revelation 3:10; Revelation 6:9-10; Revelation 8:13; Revelation 11:9-10; Revelation 12:12; Revelation 14:6-7; Revelation 17:8. They are the apostate, nominal Christians who are utterly blinded and hardened. Philippians 3:18-19 gives their character and destiny. They claim possession of the earth as belonging to them, but God is not only the God of heaven, He is also “the God of the earth” (Revelation 11:4). God’s power is manifested in the physical resurrection and the visible translation of the two witnesses. Their enemies see a great miracle. The apostates who ridicule even now a physical resurrection, who sneer at the blessed hope of a coming translation of the saints, will witness these two great facts. No wonder that a great fear fell upon them. The raised witnesses belong to the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4).

11:14-19. The seventh trumpet – the third woe

Verses 14-18. Anticipation of Christ’s worldwide kingdom

Verse 19. God’s temple in heaven opened

Revelation 11:13-18.

The terror becomes still greater when the whole city is shaken by a mighty earthquake. This is not a symbolical earthquake but a convulsion of nature by which the fourth part of the city falls and 7,000 men are killed. It marks the end of the second woe. Then those who escaped the visitation gave glory unto the God of heaven. It is only inspired by fear. They do not turn in repentance unto God. Here ends the parenthetical vision.

The seventh trumpet brings us to the very end of the tribulation and to the beginning of the millennial reign. It is Jerusalem’s deliverance. He who alone is worthy receives the kingdom. How clear this ought to make the fact that our Lord has no earthly kingdom now, but He receives the promised kingdom on the earth at the end of these things. See Daniel 7:14. Heaven worships too; they celebrate the fact that He has taken His great power. It is a review of all that takes place and what follows when He appears out of heaven. The nations were full of wrath (Psalms 2:1-12; Psalms 46:6); His wrath is come; resurrection will follow; this points to the time after the kingdom (Revelation 20:12). And His servants, the prophets and the saints, receive their rewards, to reign with Him.

Chapters 11:19- 12: 13

Satan's Power and Masterpiece

1. *The vision of the opened temple* (Revelation 11:19)
2. *The woman with child* (Revelation 12:1-5)
3. *The escape of the woman* (Revelation 12:6)
4. *War in heaven* (Revelation 12:7-12)
5. *The dragon persecuting the woman* (Revelation 12:13-17)
6. *The beast out of the sea* (Revelation 13:1-10)
7. *The beast out of the earth* (Revelation 13:11-18)

Revelation 11:19.

What follows now brings the great tribulation, the 1,260 days, into prominence. As we have seen the seventh trumpet takes us right to the end. But now we are led back.

Revelation 11:19 of chapter 11 belongs properly to the twelfth chapter. The ark contains the covenant made with Israel. This is now to be remembered and connected with it are the manifestations of coming wrath for those who oppress His people.

The Antichrist, Satan's Superman in Book of Revelation

After the Apostle John had seen and described the "Beast" that came up **out of the SEA**, he saw another "Beast" come up **out of the EARTH**. This "Second Beast," while John does not say it **was a lamb**, had "**Two Horns**" "**like a lamb**," that is, it was **LAMB-LIKE**. Because of this resemblance many claim that the "Second Beast" is the Antichrist, for Antichrist is supposed to imitate Christ. While the **LAMB** (Christ) is mentioned in the Book of Revelation 22 times,

the description given of Him in chapter 5:6, is that of a lamb having "**SEVEN HORNS**" and not "**TWO**." This differentiates Him from the "**lamb-like Beast**" that comes up out of the earth, who, though he is "**lamb-like in appearance**

SPEAKS AS A DRAGON."

The "Second Beast" has a name. He is called the "**FALSE PROPHET**" three times. First in chapter 16:13, then in chapter 19:20, and again in chapter 20:10. Twice he is associated with the "First Beast" (Antichrist) and once with the "Dragon" (Satan) and the "First Beast," and as they are **PERSONS** so must he be. The fact that he is called the "False Prophet" is proof that he is not the "Antichrist." Jesus had a fore view of him when He said--"There shall arise **'FALSE CHRISTS'** and **'FALSE PROPHETS,'** and shall show **GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS:** insomuch that, if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect." Matt. 24:24. Here Jesus differentiates between "**FALSE CHRISTS**" and "**FALSE PROPHETS,**" therefore the "**ANTICHRIST**" and the "**FALSE PROPHET**" cannot be the same.

That the "Second Beast" comes up **out of the EARTH** may signify that he will be a **resurrected person.** If, as was hinted at, "Antichrist" was Judas resurrected, why should not the "False Prophet" also be a resurrected person? There will be two persons, as we have seen, who shall come back from Heaven as the "Two Witnesses," Moses and Elijah, why not two persons come up from "The Underworld," brought up by Satan to counteract the work of the "Two Witnesses"? The fact that the "First Beast" (Antichrist), and the "Second Beast" (False Prophet) are cast **ALIVE** into the "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 19:20) is further proof that they are more than ordinary mortals, and that the "First Beast" is **more** than the last ruling Emperor of the revived Roman Empire. He is the **Antichrist**, Satan's **SUPERMAN.**

In the "Dragon," the "Beast," and the "False Prophet," we have the "**SATANIC TRINITY**," Satan's imitation of the "Divine Trinity." In the unseen and invisible "Dragon" we have the **FATHER** (the **ANTI-GOD**). In the "Beast" we have the "**SON OF PERDITION**" (the **ANTI-CHRIST**), **begotten** of the Dragon, who appears on the earth, dies, and is resurrected, and to whom is given a throne by his Father the Dragon. In the "False Prophet" we have the "**ANTI-SPIRIT**," who **proceeds** from the "Dragon Father" and "Dragon Son," and whose speech is like the Dragon's. The "Dragon" then will be the "**ANTI-GOD**," the "Beast" the "**ANTI-CHRIST**," and the "False Prophet" the "**ANTI-SPIRIT**," and the fact that all three are cast **ALIVE** into the "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:10) is proof that they together form a "**Triumvirate**" which we may well call--"**THE SATANIC TRINITY.**"

Again the "Antichrist" is to be a **KING** and rule over a **KINGDOM.** He will accept the "Kingdoms of this world" that Satan offered Christ, and that Christ refused. Matt. 4:8-10. He will also **EXALT** himself, and claim to be God. 2. Thess. 2:4. But the "False Prophet" is not a King, He does not exalt himself, he exalts the "First Beast" (Antichrist). His relation to the "First Beast" is the same

as the Holy Spirit's relation to Christ. He causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the "First Beast." He also has power to give **life**, and in this he imitates the Holy Spirit. And as the followers of Christ are sealed by the Holy Spirit until the "**Day of Redemption**" (Eph. 4:30); so, the followers of Antichrist shall be sealed by the False Prophet until the "**Day of Perdition**." Rev. 13:16-17.

The False Prophet will be a "Miracle Worker." While Jesus was a "miracle worker," He did all His mighty works in the "**power**" of the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:38. Among the miracles that the False Prophet will perform he will bring down **FIRE FROM HEAVEN**. As we have seen under the work of the "Two Witnesses," chapter 11:1-14, there will probably be a "**FIRE-TEST**" between Elijah and the False Prophet, and the test as to who is God of Mt. Carmel will be repeated. That Satan, who will then energize the False Prophet, can do this is clear from Job 1:16, where Satan, having secured per-mission from God to touch all that Job had, brought down "**fire from heaven**" and burned up Job's sheep and servants.

The False Prophet then commands the people to make an image of the beast. "**IMAGE OF THE BEAST**." This is further proof that the "First Beast" is the Antichrist. It is a strange weakness of mankind that they must have some **VISIBLE** God to worship, and when the Children of Israel, who had been delivered from Egypt under Moses' leadership, thought he had forsaken them because he did not come down from the Mount, they called Aaron to make them gods which should go before them, and Aaron made for them the "**GOLDEN CALF**." Ex. 32:1-6. So the False Prophet will have the people make for the purpose of worship an "**IMAGE OF THE BEAST**." But the wonderful thing about the "**IMAGE**" is that the False Prophet will have power to give **LIFE** to it, and cause it to **SPEAK**, and to demand that all who will not worship it shall be put to death. In other words the "**IMAGE**" will be a **living, speaking, AUTOMATON**.

This "Image" reminds us of the "**GOLDEN IMAGE**" that Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be made and set up in the "Plain of Dura," in the Province of Babylon (Dan. 3:1-30), before which, at the sounding of musical instruments, the people were commanded to bow down and worship under penalty, for those who disobeyed, of being cast into a "**BURNING FIERY FURNACE**." Doubtless there will be many in the "Day of Antichrist" who will refuse to bow down and worship the "**Image of the Beast**," and who will not escape as did the "Three Hebrew Children," though God may inter-pose in a miraculous way to deliver some. And as if this was not enough the False Prophet shall cause-- "**ALL**, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a '**MARK**' in their **RIGHT HAND**, or in their **FOREHEAD**; and that no man might **BUY**

or **SELL**, save he that has the '**MARK**' or the '**NAME OF THE BEAST**,' or the '**NUMBER OF HIS NAME**.' This "**MARK**" will be known as the "**BRAND OF HELL**."

This is what the world is fast coming to. The time is not far distant when the various "Trusts" and "Combinations of Capital" will be merged into a "**FEDERATION OF TRUSTS**," at the head of which shall be a "**NAPOLEON OF CAPITAL**." Ultimately this "Federation of Trusts" will extend to the whole world, at the head of which shall be **THE ANTICHRIST**, and the **producer** and **consumer** will be powerless in the tentacles of this **OCTOPUS**, and no man shall be able to **BUY** or **SELL** who has not the "**MARK OF THE BEAST**" either upon his "**right hand**" or on his "**forehead**." This "Mark" will be **BRANDED** or burnt on. It will probably be the "**NUMBER OF THE BEAST**" or "666." The number "666" is the "**NUMBER OF MAN**," and stops short of the perfect number **SEVEN**. Man was created on the **SIXTH** day. Goliath, the opposer of God's people, a type of Satan, was 6 cubits in height, he had 6 pieces of armor, and his spearhead weighed 600 shekels. 1. Sam. 17:4-7. Nebuchadnezzar's Image, a type of the "Image of the Beast," was 60 cubits in height, 6 cubits wide, and 6 instruments of music summoned the worshippers. Dan. 3:1-7.

In that day men will doubtless prefer to have the "**MARK**" on the back of their right hand so it can be readily seen in the act of signing checks, drafts, and receipts. There will doubtless be public officials in all public places of business to see that no one buys or sells who has not the "**MARK**." This will apply to women as well as men. No one can shop, or even buy from the huckster at the door, without the "**MARK**," under **penalty of DEATH**. Those will be awful times for those who will not **WORSHIP THE BEAST**. If they can neither buy or sell without the "**MARK**," they must beg, or starve or be killed. The instrument of death will be the guillotine (Rev. 20:4), and the daily papers will contain a list of the names of those who were beheaded the day before so as to frighten the people into obedience to the law. The doom of the "Satanic Trinity" will be, that at the close of that awful time of Tribulation the Lord Jesus Christ will return, and the "Dragon," the "**Anti-God**," will be cast into the "**BOTTOMLESS PIT**" for a 1000 years (Rev. 20:1-3), and the "Beast," the "**Anti-Christ**," and the "False Prophet," the "**Anti-Spirit**," will be cast **ALIVE** into the "**LAKE OF FIRE**." Rev. 19:20.

Chapters 12-13.

Seven personages performing during the last days of the tribulation

12:1-2. Person one – the woman, Israel

Verse 1. The woman

Verse 2. The woman's travail

12:3-4. Person two - the dragon, Satan

Verse 3. Dragon in prophetic view

Verse 4. The dragon in historical perspective

Revelation 12:1-5.

Who is represented by the sun-clothed woman? Romanists have made out of her the Virgin Mary. Many expositors claim it is the Church which is represented by this woman. Some claim the woman is the professing Church and the man-child represents, according to their view, a class of overcomers who will escape the tribulation. This is a favoured interpretation of some of the so-called "holiness people."

In the light of the scope of this book the woman cannot possibly have anything to do with the Church. Again, Christian Science has made the most absurd claim that this woman represents that instrument of Satan, the deluded woman, whom they worship as the founder of their cult. A hundred years ago another sect existed in England under the leadership of a woman, who also claimed to be the one of this vision. We do not need to seek long for the true meaning of the woman seen by John. She represents Israel. Everything in the symbolical statements bears this out, especially the crown with the twelve stars (Genesis 37:9).

"Thus she is seen clothed with the glory of the sun--that is, of Christ Himself as He will presently appear in supreme power as Sun of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2); for the sun is the ruler of the day. As a consequence, her glory of old, before the day-dawn, the reflected light of her typical system, is like the moon under her feet. Upon her head the crown of twelve stars speaks naturally of her twelve tribes, planets now around the central sun."

It is Israel, what she is in the purposes of God. And the child, the nation brought forth, is the Messiah, Christ. Even so Paul writes of Israel, “of whom as according to the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever” (Romans 9:5). The identity of the child is established beyond controversy by the fact that the child is caught up unto God and His throne, destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Psalms 2:9; Revelation 2:27). The great red dragon, the enemy of the woman and the child, is Satan. Seven crowns are symbolical of his authority as the god of this age and the ten horns symbolical of his power. These historical facts are seen first through this vision. But this is done for the one purpose of bringing into view what is yet in store of Israel during the end time. Christ ascended upon high, took His place at the right hand of God, is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. Then the present Christian age began. It is not recorded in this vision at all. He who came from Israel and who was rejected by His own, is nevertheless Israel’s Messiah, the hope of Israel. In Him and through Him alone the promises made to Israel can be fulfilled. The fulfilment of these promises is preceded by great sorrows and tribulation, the travail pains which come upon Israel during the great tribulation, before He, whom Israel once disowned, is revealed as Deliverer and King. And the red Dragon will do His most awful work during that period of tribulation, a work of hatred against the faithful seed of the woman.

12:5-6. Person three – the male child, Christ

Verse 5. The male child

Verse 6. The woman’s flight

Revelation 12:6.

The flight of the woman, Israel, has been taken by some to mean the dispersion of that nation during this age and Israel’s miraculous preservation. But this is incorrect. It is true Israel has been miraculously preserved and Satan’s hatred, too, has been against that nation. But here we have a special period mentioned, the 1,260 days, the last three and one-half years of Daniel’s seventieth week. It means, therefore, that when the Dragon rises in all his furious power to exterminate the nation, God will preserve her. However, before we are told the details of that preservation and Satan’s hatred, we read of the war in heaven. Satan is cast out of heaven, down upon the earth. Revelation 12:15-17 and the entire chapter 13 will tell us what he will do on the earth.

12:7-12. Person four – Michael, the archangel

Verses 7-9. Michael

Verses 10-12. Rejoicing over Satan's expulsion

Revelation 12:7-12.

This great scene takes place before the great tribulation begins. Satan's place is not in hell at this time. As we saw in the message to Pergamos his throne is on earth, he is the god of this age. His dominion is in the air, he is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). Our present conflict as believers is "against principalities, against authorities, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 6:12). Satan as the accuser of the brethren has access even into the presence of God. His accusations are ended. All the redeemed are gathered before the throne. All the malice and power of Satan could not frustrate the purpose of God. His grace and power have been victorious. Thus when the saints come into the heavenly possession Satan's dominion there is at an end. The purchased possession, the region above, will be redeemed by the power of God (Ephesians 1:13).

Michael and his angels will begin their short and decisive war against Satan and his angels. Michael is the one archangel mentioned in Scripture. It is not the first time he meets Satan face to face (Jude 1:9). And Daniel speaks of Michael, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1). From this we learn that Michael will not only cause the expulsion of Satan out of heaven, but he will also stand up for the believing portion of Israel.

Satan is then cast out into the earth and his angels are cast out with him. It is identical with what we have seen already under the fifth trumpet, the star fallen out of heaven, opening the pit of the abyss with the darkening smoke and the locust swarms coming forth. Then there is joy in heaven because the accuser is cast down and his accusations are forever silenced. And the "woe" is pronounced upon those who dwell on the earth.

12:13-16. Satan persecutes the woman

Verses 13-14. Reason for Satan's persecution

Verses 15-16. Israel's preservation

12: 17. Person five – the Israelite remnant

Verse 17. The godly remnant

Revelation 12:13-17.

He turns in fury against the woman which brought forth the man-child. Satan realizes now that his time is short. His exclusion from heaven will soon be followed by his arrest and imprisonment in the pit for a thousand years, and after that there is prepared for him his eternal home of misery, the lake of fire. As he knows that Israel is mostly concerned in the final drama, and the believing portion of that nation will inherit the kingdom, he turns in wrath against them. Revelation 12:6 should be connected with Revelation 12:14. It is symbolical language again we have here. The wilderness is a place of isolation, and the place prepared, speaks of God's care for them. But it is not the entire nation. The apostate part sides with Satan and with Satan's man, the Antichrist. But there is another part, which is preserved. This part is in the place of isolation among the nations. The water cast out by Satan is symbolical of the hatred which Satan stirs up against the people amongst the nations. But there will be other agencies in the earth by which this Satanic attempt to wipe from the face of the earth this faithful part of the nation will be frustrated.



The great theatre, Pergamum

Chapter 13

13:1-10. Person six – the beast out of the sea

Verses 1-5. The beast – the Roman prince

Verses 6-10. The beast's wicked career

Revelation 13:1-10.

This chapter brings now fully into view the Satanic powers operating during the great tribulation--the forty-two months. Satan's masterpieces are on the earth; energized by him and endued with his powers they work together to stamp out all that is left of the truth on earth. Their combined efforts are directed against the godly remnant of Jews and against those Gentiles who accepted the message of the gospel of the kingdom.

And John sees this first beast having ten horns with crowns and seven heads and these heads have names of blasphemy. Daniel had seen Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greco-Macedonia under the emblem of the lion, the bear and the leopard. John sees this beast here like a leopard, with bear's feet and lion's mouth. This revived Roman empire is an amalgamation of parts of the previous world empires. The preceding ones are absorbed by the last, the Roman empire. Therefore the revived Roman empire will contain the different elements in one great monster. This Roman empire will be revived in the first part of the final seven years. We saw this under the first seal. Here is the beginning of the period for which the dragon gives to him his power, and his throne and great authority. It becomes now fully possessed by Satan. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms which will exist in that empire. We are told later that these ten kings "have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Revelation 17:13).

In the same chapter the beast is also seen coming out of the abyss (17:8) denoting its Satanic origin. The heads represent the seven forms of government which have characterized the empire in the past, the seventh becomes the eighth. One of the heads is especially mentioned; later we read "he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (17:11). He was as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. This head denotes the imperial form of government, which had died, and now is revived in the person of the leader, the prince of [Daniel 9:27](#), the little horn, which Daniel saw in the midst of the ten horns. This will be Satan's man, one of his masterpieces. The whole earth will wonder after that beast and its Satan-possessed head.

13:11-18. Person seven – the beast out of the earth, the false prophet

Revelation 13:11-18.

The second beast is not an empire with a great leader, but a person. The first beast is out of the sea; the second out of the earth (land). The first has ten horns; the second has two. The beast out of the sea comes first; the other beast follows him. The first beast is a political power, the second is a religious leader. The first is a Gentile power and its head a Gentile; the second is a Jew. The first beast has Satanic power; so has the second beast. The second beast induced the worship of the first beast whose dominion is over the entire Roman world and after whom the whole earth wonders; the sphere of the second beast is Palestine. The first beast through its head makes in the beginning of the seven years a covenant with many of the Jews, but in the middle of the week he breaks that covenant (Daniel 9:27). That covenant will probably be the permission given to the Jews to build a temple and to resume their sacrificial worship.

The first and the second beast make a covenant, which marks the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. But when the little horn, the first beast, becomes energized by Satan, he breaks that covenant. Then the second beast demands the worship of the first beast as well as the worship of himself. This second beast is the final, personal Antichrist. He has two horns like a lamb, and speaks like a dragon. He is a counterfeit lamb and his two horns are an imitation of the priestly and kingly authority of Christ. He is the one of whose coming our Lord spoke (John 5:43). He is the man of sin, the son of perdition described by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17. He must be a Jew or his claim of being Israel's true Messiah would not be accepted by the Jews.

Daniel also gives an interesting prophetic picture which bears out his Jewish character and his wicked, satanic ways. See Daniel 11:36-39. This second beast is also called the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10). He does lying wonders. He reigns as the false king in Jerusalem and sits as god in the temple. He will be the religious head of apostate Judaism and apostate Christendom. It is the strong delusion of the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. He also demands the worship of the first beast. He makes an image of the first beast and gives breath to it, so that it can speak. Whoever has not the mark of the beast on hand and forehead cannot buy nor sell, and whosoever does not worship the beast will be killed. And those who worship the beast and receive the mark are lost souls. Great will be the number of martyrs at that time. To find out what the mark is and some of the other details would only be guesswork. No one can imagine the horrors of that time when Satan rules for a short time on earth and produces the great tribulation, such as was not before on earth, nor ever can be again.

But what does the number 666 mean? If we were to state all the different views on this number and the different applications we would have to fill many pages and then we would not know what is right and wrong. Seven is the complete perfect number; six is incomplete and is man's number. Here we have three times six. It is humanity fallen, filled with pride, defying God. The number 666 signifies man's day and man's defiance of God under Satan's power in its culmination.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14. Foreview of the end of the Tribulation

Grace Ancient

1. *The Lamb and the 144,000* (Revelation 14:1-5)
2. *The everlasting gospel* (Revelation 14:6-7)
3. *Fall of Babylon anticipated* (Revelation 14:8)
4. *Wrath for the worshippers of the beast* (Revelation 14:9-11)
5. *The blessed dead* (Revelation 14:12-13)
6. *The harvest and the vintage* (Revelation 14:14-20)

14:1-5. The lamb and the 144,000

Verses 1-3. Identity of the 144,000

Verses 4-5. Their character and destiny

Revelation 14:1-5.

A series of visions follow the dark scenes in chapter 13. The conditions under the domineering power of the two beasts are going to be changed. The Lord will answer the prayers of the persecuted Jewish people and deliver them by His personal coming out of the opened heaven. This glorious manifestation is fully revealed in the nineteenth chapter. Here it is anticipated. There is much said about this intervention in behalf of the suffering godly remnant in the Old Testament. As an illustration we call attention to Psalms 44:1-26; Psalms 45:1-17. In the Forty-fourth Psalm we find a description of their suffering and the cry to heaven: "Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake." In the Forty-fifth Psalm the answer to this prayer is recorded. The King riding in

majesty, dealing with His enemies, surrounded by redeemed companies, is beheld in that Psalm. The entire book of Psalms should be studied from the viewpoint of prophecy; it will shed much light upon these events of this portion of Revelation.

But who are the 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, having His Name and His Father's Name written on their foreheads? In the previous chapter we saw a company on earth who have the mark of the beast on their foreheads; but here is a company who have His Name and the Father's Name on the forehead. A good many have made of this company a portion of the Church, as first-fruits, who, according to this theory, have lived separated lives and are caught up into heaven, while the other believers, who did not live as near to God as they did, will have to suffer in the great tribulation.

The reader who has followed the unfolding of this book will see at once that such an interpretation is impossible. These 144,000 have nothing to do whatever with the Church. And the 144,000 learn to sing this new song. Who then are the harpers? They are the martyred company seen in connection with the fifth seal and they also include now their brethren which were slain during the great tribulation. The characteristics of the 144,000 are next given. Revelation 14:4 must not be interpreted in a literal sense. Those who apply it to a first-fruits of the Church have done so, and it has led to much confusion and even worse things. Literal impurity is not in view. If it had a literal meaning this company would consist of men only. The woman, the great harlot Babylon and her daughters, the godless and christless religious world-systems (chapter 17) are then on earth. They did not defile themselves with the corruptions and idolatries prevalent on the earth. They kept themselves from spiritual fornication. They are the first-fruits and the earnest of the blessings soon in store for the earth. They were devoted to the Lamb and no lie (not guile) was in their mouth. The lie and delusion of the end-time were utterly repudiated by them.

14:6-8. The fall of Babylon foreseen

Verses 6-7. Proclamation of the everlasting gospel

Revelation 14:6-7.

This has nothing to do with the preaching of the gospel during this church-age. The angel must not be taken as a literal angel. The preaching of any gospel to those who dwell on earth is never committed to angels, but to men. This is true of the gospel of grace which redeemed sinners are privileged to proclaim during this age, and of the everlasting gospel during the end of the age. The gospel preached is the gospel of the kingdom and the preachers are this faithful remnant of God's earthly people. Nothing of this preaching was said in chapter 7, though

the result, the gathered multitude coming out of the great tribulation is seen there. But here, where the moral and spiritual characteristics of the remnant of Israel are seen, their testimony also comes into view. What this everlasting gospel is we need not explain, for Revelation 14:7 gives us the information. It is everlasting because it concerns the Creator as the only object of worship. And it will sound the loudest and go forth in no uncertain sound at the time when pandemonium reigns on earth, and heaven is about to open to manifest the King of glory. How great is God's mercy! And the nations who hear and turn to God will enter the coming kingdom. Read in connection with Revelation 14:6-7, Psalms 96:1-13. It will give you a great deal of light on this portion of Revelation.

Verse 8. Fall of Babylon anticipated

Revelation 14:8.

This is an anticipative announcement of what will also happen as the great tribulation nears its close. The particulars are not given here. These and what Babylon is and how Babylon the great (city must be omitted in this verse) falls, we shall find in chapters 17 and 18. God's intervention in judgment upon the great whore is simply mentioned here.

14:9-13. The punishment of the wicked

Verses 9-11. Worshippers of the beast and the fate

Verses 12-13. The bliss of the martyrs

Revelation 14:9-11.

Here we have a third angelic announcement. It concerns the worshipers of the beast. They drink of the wrath of God. It is "without mixture," that is, no mercy is found in the cup of His indignation. It serves as a solemn warning. Babylon falls prior to the glorious appearing of the King, and the beast will afterward manifest his power as never before. Therefore, the warning concerning the inevitable fate of those who worship the beast and take its mark.

Revelation 14:12-13.

It is a voice which proclaims this. It refers especially to those who are martyrs at that time. Certainly all our loved ones who fall asleep in Jesus are blessed. They are absent from the body and consciously present with the Lord. But here is the comfort for those who faithfully resist the worship of the beast, who refuse to take the mark. They become martyrs. The book of Revelation will be read and

studied during the great tribulation. Satan through the beasts, will try to annihilate it and the rest of the Bible. But it will be a failure as all former attempts to get the Bible out of the world have failed. Here then, is first the warning. If they worship the beast they will be lost forever. Then there is the alternative to resist the beast and be killed as to the body, but die in the Lord. “From henceforth” means during the tribulation when the great persecution goes on.

14:14-20. Preview of Armageddon

Verses 14-16. The harvest

Verses 17-20. The vintage

Revelation 14:14-20.

This brings now the coming of the Son of Man with judgment power into view. The harvest and the vintage have come. The sickle is put in. The reapers used will be angels (Matthew 13:41). The day of vengeance has come. Read Isaiah 63:1-6; Joel 3:1-21; Zechariah 12:1-14; Zechariah 13:1-9; Zechariah 14:1-21. This will greatly help to a better understanding of the harvest and the vintage. The nations and their armies will be in the land; the Assyrian from the north, foreshadowed by the wicked work of Antiochus Epiphanes (Daniel 8:1-27) will do his awful work, the false prophet, the second beast is in Jerusalem. But then the judgment clouds break. The battle of Armageddon comes into view for the first time in Revelation 14:20. How we ought to praise Him for His infinite grace which has separated us from these awful judgments of vengeance and wrath. His people will be at home when these things come to pass.



The Time of the Harvest

John Wesley once said, "Give me a hundred men who love nothing but God and hate nothing but sin, and I will shake the whole world for Christ." I think Wesley probably underestimated, because in the 14th chapter of the book of Revelation, to which we come this morning, we read that Jesus chose not just 12, not even 100, but 144,000 men, and with that number he would to shake the world in the closing days of this age. In Chapter 7 we saw these 144,000 were chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, 12,000 from each tribe. In Chapter 14 they reappear, and we will see their ministry described:

Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. (Revelation 14:1-5 NIV)

It is important to see exactly the location where these 144,000 and the Lamb are seen. The opening sentence tells us they were "standing on Mount Zion" -- the temple mount in Jerusalem. This means that they were on earth, in

Jerusalem, not in heaven. And they are seen together, the Lamb (Jesus). They are 144,000 male Jews chosen out of Israel -- "Christ's Commandos," as we called them earlier.

I want to try and put some loose ends together here. According to the promise of Jesus given to the seven churches in the opening chapters of this book, he told them in several places that he would take the church (i.e., the true believers of this present age), to be with him before this last seven-year period would begin upon the earth. This was accomplished, as Paul describes it in First Thessalonians 4, in what is called the "rapture" (or departure) of the church to be with Christ. The last word of that Thessalonians passage is, "so shall we ever be with the Lord," (1 Thessalonians 4:17b KJV).

The problem that people get into at that point is they think that being "with the Lord" in heaven means to be taken far off into space somewhere. We all have difficulty thinking of heaven as being right here on earth as well as off in space. In other words, heaven is another dimension of existence just beyond our present senses. You can be in heaven and still be on earth at the same time. As I read these prophetic passages I am more and more convinced that this will be the case -- the church is with the Lord, but the Lord is on earth during the whole last seven years. The church is with him, but invisible to the rest of the world, and ministering to this select group of 144,000 Jews as Jesus appears to them from time to time. If this is true, Jesus will be in exactly the same condition with them as he was with the eleven disciples after his resurrection, when for a period of 40 days he appeared from time to time to them. At different times and in different places he was with them, and yet he would not be with them; he would step back into the realm of invisibility after appearing in their midst. This seems to be the situation here. These are not only 12 disciples -- they are 12 times 12 times 1,000 -- all men of Israel chosen for a special work on earth during these last days. If you can put that scene into your imagination you will get a much clearer picture of what is going on in these scenes. Now let us look at the characteristics of these 144,000. We are told five things about them:

First, they learn a new song which they hear from heaven. Remember, heaven is not way off somewhere, it is just beyond the realm of visibility. They hear a great group singing the song of the redeemed. We are not told precisely who it is that sings, but you will notice they are identified with a pronoun. Verse 3 says, "And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders." Who are "they"? It is apparently a huge group. They make a sound like the "roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder." But it was a sweet sound -- "like that of harpists playing their harps." Surely, what the 144,000 hear is the church as it is "with the Lord," singing his praises

and singing the song of the redeemed! These 144,000 are living men, still on earth, not yet glorified or transfigured, but following the Lord as he appears to them from time to time as we see him here now on Mount Zion. In other words, they are men who march to a different drum beat. It was Henry David Thoreau who said, "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer." Here is a group of committed men who listen to different drum beat; they follow the music of heaven! They can learn the song of the redeemed because they know themselves what redemption means. They, too, have been redeemed.

Second, we are told they kept themselves for the Lord only. They were separated unto him. The phrase is, "they did not defile themselves with women." Now don't get upset, ladies. These are not chauvinists; they are celibates. This is not a put-down of marriage, or of sex. It is a reference to what these 144,000 would do. For them to be married would be defiling because it is outside the will of God for them. That is all this means. They are separated unto the Lord to be his, just as the Apostle Paul was. Paul tells us in several places that he was committed to celibacy. He was single, and he devoted his life to the Lord as an unmarried man. He knew it was not the will of God for him to be married. So these men follow Christ completely. They are free to do so without any ties with anyone else because they were called to a dangerous and demanding work and needed to be unencumbered in following the Lamb wherever he went.

That is the third thing said of them. They followed the Lamb throughout the earth. I believe that these 144,000 are the brethren whom our Lord refers to in Matthew 25, when he tells us that where he tells us that when he comes again as the Son of Man he will sit on his throne and will judge the nations on the basis of how they treated the "least of these my brethren" -- "Inasmuch as you have done it [or did not do it] unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it [or not done it] unto me," (Matthew 25:40 KJV). The world's treatment of these Jewish Christians will reveal where each individual's heart loyalty is truly found, during these terrible days of worldwide judgment. The fourth thing said is they are the "firstfruits" of the harvest during the tribulation period. We already have seen part of this in Chapter 7 -- the great multitude which no man can number that come from every "tribe and nation and people and language" (Revelation 7:9 NIV) in response to the preaching of these 144,000. We will see another aspect of that when we come to Verses 14-16 of this chapter.

The fifth thing that is said about these is they are transformed men. They are clearly born again. "No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless," i.e., without blemish. They have been cleansed and changed by grace -- just as we also have been, if we know the Lord. Jude tells us that true believers now

will be presented before God's presence "without fault and with great joy," (Jude 1:24). So it is also with these redeemed Jews who recognize their once-crucified Messiah and follow him faithfully wherever he goes. At this point the scene suddenly changes, and John sees three angels flying through the heavens making three important announcements. This first one is given in Verses 6 and 7:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth -- to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." (Revelation 14:6-7 NIV)

This is called here the "eternal gospel," i.e., the everlasting gospel. We learn from the angel's words that it is the gospel of creation; it is the witness to God that nature unceasingly gives. People are told to worship him who "made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." That is the fundamental witness of God to found everywhere in the world. It is the witness that no one can miss because it is manifest all around us. As the words of Psalm 19 proclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge," (Psalms 19:1-2 KJV). We are part of nature.

Our own nature witnesses that there is a God. It takes four years of college and two years of postgraduate work to deny that! Nature is everywhere testifying to the existence and the glory of God. What it says is, "There is a God and you cannot live without him. You breathe by him. You think by him." As Paul said to the Athenians, "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) -- everybody, without exception does. So this gospel declares, "Since there is a God, and you cannot exist without him, therefore, worship him!" It is the fundamental cry of nature.

In the great faith chapter in Hebrews 11, the writer says in Verse 6, "He who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him," Hebrews 11:6 KJV). Paul rings the changes on this in Romans 1, in the words, "What may be known about God is plain to them," (Romans 1:19 NIV). God has made it plain through the things that he has created. This becomes the basis for the ultimate judgment of mankind. God will say, in effect, to people in that day, "If you knew that I was essential to you, did you worship me?" That is the gospel by which men will be judged when, as it says, "the hour of his judgment has come." A second angel now cries out in Verse 8:

A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,

which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."
(Revelation 14:8 NIV)

This is the first mention in Revelation of "Babylon the Great." It will move onto center stage in Chapters 17 and 18. It is the woman who rides the beast that we referred to briefly last week. It is, as we shall see when we come to those chapters, the false church, that which professes to be Christian but really is not, the church that does go through the great tribulation! Before it appears, God wants us to know that it is treacherous and adulterous, and it will fall in due course. Then a third angel speaks:

A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur[or brimstone] in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name." (Revelation 14:9-11 NIV)

We saw in Chapter 13 how the Antichrist exerts economic control of the whole world. No one can buy or sell without the mark of the beast imprinted into the back of the hand or on the forehead. According to this passage, the angel announces this is a fatal choice. Anyone who receives this mark shall experience the fury of God's wrath to the last dregs.

This is what is often called "hellfire and brimstone" preaching. It is regarded as contrary to the gospel of love. But all through the Bible you see that God's love is manifest to men everywhere in urging them to escape this judgment. God in love pleads with people, "Do not go on to this end!" But ultimately he must judge those who refuse his offer of grace. He says, in effect, "I love you and I can provide all you need. Therefore, love me, and you will find the fulfillment your heart is looking for." But many men and women say, "No, I do not want that. I will take your gifts, I will take all the good things you provide, but I do not want you! Let me run my own life. Let me serve my own ends. Let me have my own kingdom." To such, God ultimately says, "All right, have it your way!"

God has three choices: First, he can let rebellion go on forever and never judge it. In this case the terrible things that are happening on earth, all these distressing injustices, the cruelty, the anger, the hate, the malice, the sorrow, the hurt, the pain, the death that now prevails will go on forever. God does not want that, and neither does man. Second, God can force men to obey him and control them as robots. But he will never do that because that means they

cannot love him. Love cannot be forced. Therefore, third, the only choice God really has is that he must withdraw ultimately from those who refuse his love. He must let them have their own way forever. That results in terrible torment of godlessness. If God is necessary to us, then to take him out of our lives is to plunge us into the most terrible sense of loneliness and abandonment that mankind can know. We have all experienced it to some degree when we get what we want and then discover we do not want what we have got! For that sense of bored emptiness to go on forever is unspeakable torment. Now, once again in the midst of this bleak scene, the saints of that day are encouraged:

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.

Then I heard a voice from heaven says, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." (Revelation 14:12-13 NIV)

When the earth is filled with violence and widespread hate, the work of the saints of that day is to wait. "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints," a determination not to yield at any point or to give way to the glorification of man in that day.

Then the promise comes from the voice of the Spirit himself. John is told to write this down as a special guarantee: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." Why does he add "from now on?" It has always been true, has it not, that the dead who die in the Lord are blessed? I have stood at many gravesides and repeated these words, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. They shall rest from their labor and their deeds will follow them." That has always been true, but there is a special reason why John is told to add the words, "from now on." It is because the saints of that day it will feel as if they have missed the resurrection! The church has already been taken out of the world, some by resurrection and some by transformation, and these believers know this. Those that once were here are gone suddenly, transformed by the Lord himself. As Paul said, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be changed," (1 Corinthians 15:52). To those saints who are on earth after that, it will raise the troubling thought that when they die, they are not sure that they will be included in the resurrection, for it is already past.

It is exactly the same problem that the Thessalonian Christians faced when Paul wrote his first letter to them. They thought that when their loved ones died they would miss the rapture because they saw that event in terms of catching up or snatching away living saints. So they had written to Paul about it and he said to them, in effect, "Don't worry, your dead loved ones will make it. The Lord himself will come, 'and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord," (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). So these saints of the last days are given that special reassurance of the Spirit: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. They, too, shall rest from their labor, and their deeds will follow them." Now once again the scene changes. We learned in the first section that the 144,000 from the tribes of Israel are the "firstfruits" of the harvest of the last days. If they are the firstfruits, now comes the rest of the harvest:

I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So he that was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. (Revelation 14:14-16 NIV)

We must ask, who is this one seated on the cloud "like a son of man," wearing a victor's crown and holding a sickle in his hand? There can hardly be any doubt: it is the Lord Jesus. He himself had given (this to) his disciples in Matthew 13, in the parable of the wheat and the weeds (Matthew 13:24-30, 13:36-43). In the parable, the servants had asked the Lord, "Shall we pull up these weeds?" But he said to them, "No, let both grow together until the harvest, and then I will tell the harvester, 'First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, and then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'" Then Jesus interpreted that parable to the disciples, saying, "The harvest is the end of the age (the 7-year period to which we have come in this book), and the harvesters are the angels." This agrees exactly with what we have here. The angels announce that the time of harvest has come, and the words of Jesus in Matthew 13 will be literally fulfilled. Let me read them to you:

"The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 13:41-43 NIV)

These are very clear words from the lips of Jesus himself. But there is still another scene of harvest:

Another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its

grapes are ripe." The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia[which is about 180 miles]. (Revelation 14:17-20)

Is this the same story of harvest twice-told? No. You will notice the first harvest is a harvest of wheat. It is cut with a sickle, and it is a separation of the true wheat from the false-looking wheat (darnel is literally the word, "the tares of the field"). Darnel looks like wheat at first, but it is not. As we have seen, the angels will separate the two. But this is clearly a grape harvest, a vintage harvest. The vine in Scripture is frequently a symbol of Israel. The prophet Isaiah, in Chapter 5, uses this symbol, describing Israel as a vine brought out of Egypt and planted in a beautifully cared-for land by God himself. Psalm 80 refers to the same thing -- Israel is a vine brought out of Egypt. At the Last Supper, the Lord himself said, "I am the true vine and you are the branches" (John 15:5a NIV), speaking of his Jewish disciples.

As a symbol of Israel, the wine-press describes the judgment of apostate Israel. Strangely, most of the present nation of Israel does not believe their own Scriptures. Many of them are atheists. Many of them deny the Word of God in the Old Testament, or that it applies to them as a special people at all. This is, therefore, the judgment of apostate Israel. It is called in Jeremiah 30, "the time of Jacob's trouble," (Jeremiah 30:7b). Many other Scriptures describe it. It will be a time of warfare once again against Israel, beginning with an invasion of the nation by great armies from the north. Palestine is overrun. It is at this time when the woman (true Israel) whom we saw in Chapter 12 flees to hide in the desert. But apostate Israel is destroyed, and Jerusalem is sacked and partially destroyed. You can read that in Zechariah 14. The prophet Joel describes it in vivid language. Hear these words from his third chapter:

*Let the nations be roused;
let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat[which means "God judges"],
for there will I sit
to judge all the nations on every side.
 Swing the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Come, trample the grapes,
for the winepress is full
and the vats overflow --
so great is their wickedness." (Joel 3:12-13 NIV)*

Obviously this is the same scene as we have here. Notice, by the way, in

Verse 20, the change from a symbol to the literal meaning. Grapes are thrown into the winepress (that is a symbol), but blood pours out -- that is the literal meaning of pressed grapes or wine. When we take the Lord's Supper, wine symbolizes the blood of Christ for us. Here, blood covers the land for 180 miles, the length of Israel. It is a terrible scene of judgment. We will come to it again in the next two chapters where we will look at it in more detail. I must leave this now, for the moment, but I want to remind you that beyond these scenes of judgment, beyond these terrible descriptions of what is to come upon the earth, beyond the blood, beyond the slaughter, beyond the darkness, beyond the heartache and the sorrow and the misery, when the land is covered with blood from end to end, there is coming a new day, a wonderful day, a time that the prophets have described. Beyond the time of Jacob's trouble is the time when Israel shall blossom like a rose, and like a vine spread its branches throughout the whole of the earth, and their Messiah will reign amidst his people over the whole world. It is the utopia that men have dreamed of for centuries. That is what God is working toward, and that is what will eventually come to pass. I hope you are facing your own personal relationship to these things. God is always asking, "If you know that I am the One who is necessary to your very existence, do you worship me? Will you give yourself to me?" This is the choice we all must make.

Prayer

Our Father, we thank you for your wonderful word of truth. How clear it is! How true it is! We pray that the Spirit of grace may impress upon our hearts the degree to which you have gone in order to redeem men from their wicked ways, from their evil hearts, from the evil that is present in everyone of us. We thank you that you have found a way to cleanse and wash and make us new and fresh again. Help us to lay hold of that while the time is ripe. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapters 15 (-16)

The Seven Vials (Bowls)

1. *The victors' song and worship (Revelation 15:1-4)*
2. *The seven angels leave the temple (Revelation 15:5-8)*
3. *The first vial (Revelation 16:1-2)*
4. *The second vial (Revelation 16:3)*

5. *The third vial* (Revelation 16:4-7)
6. *The fourth vial* (Revelation 16:8-9)
7. *The fifth vial* (Revelation 16:10-11)
8. *The sixth vial* (Revelation 16:12)
9. *Parenthesis: The seventh vial* (Revelation 16:13-21)

15:1-8. Preparation for the final plagues

Verse 1. The sign of the seven angels

Verses 2-4. The victorious martyrs

Verses 5-8. Ministers of God's wrath

Revelation 15:1-4.

And now the last seven angels appear; seven seal judgments first, followed by seven angels with trumpets and next the last seven angels. With these seven angels who have the seven last plagues for the world, the wrath of God is completed. Before these angels go forth we behold another worship scene. Who are they? Not the twenty-four elders, but they are the harpers which we saw harping and singing in Revelation 14:2-3. They are the martyred company worshiping in glory. Here we are told of their victory and their song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-27) is the song of an earthly deliverance and the song of the Lamb concerns a spiritual deliverance. They are redeemed by power and by blood.

Revelation 15:5-8.

A wonderful sight it is. There is again an ominous silence similar to the silence in connection with the opening of the seventh seal. The silence is not mentioned. But the text shows an impressive scene of silence. Quietly the procession of these ministers of judgment file out of the temple. They are clothed in pure, white linen; this is symbolical of the righteousness which demands the judgment wrath about to be poured out. And the golden girdles with which their breasts are girdled speak still more of divine righteousness. God in His righteousness must judge and now His wrath in completeness is about to be felt on the earth. The angels left the temple empty-handed, but the four living creatures give into their hands the bowls full of the wrath of God. And behind that smoke is the fire of judgment.

Chapter 16

16:1-12. Bowls one to six

Verses 1-3. Bowls one to two.

Revelation 16:1-2.

The great voice commands the seven angels to go on their way and to empty the bowls upon the earth (Ps. 49:24). And these vials of judgments affect not only the Roman Empire, but the entire world, for the whole world is guilty before God. The first vial poured out produces a grievous sore upon the worshipers of the beast. While it is undoubtedly true that we have symbols also in these vial judgments, it is nevertheless possible that some of these plagues may have, besides the symbolical, also a literal meaning. The sixth plague which came upon Egypt, the first judgment upon the persons of the Egyptians, was also a sore (Exodus 9:10-11). The worshipers of the beast and of the image will be dreadfully afflicted.

Revelation 16:3.

This is poured out into the sea. The sea represents the Gentiles. These will now experience the wrath of God. See the plague in Egypt (Exodus 7:17-25). That was a literal thing; but not so here. Some apply it to the continued carnage which will be one of the leading features of the final history of the times of the Gentiles. That it presents a state of the most unspeakable corruption and spiritual death is obvious.

Verses 4-9. Bowls three and four

Revelation 16:4-7.

Another scene in which the blood is prominent. The apostates denied the blood, sneered at it as the Unitarians and Christian Scientists do in our own days, and now the angel of the waters saith, "Thou has given them blood to drink, for they are worthy." They have to feel the dreadful results of having rejected the Christ of God and accepted the man of sin. The children of Israel had to taste their own idolatry when Moses put the ashes of the burnt golden calf in the water and made them drink it (Exodus 32:20). They have to taste the vileness and bitterness of their apostasy. They reap what they sow. All the joys of life typified by rivers and fountains of water, are poisoned and corrupted. It is a retributive judgment of God falling upon the earth.

Revelation 16:8-9.

The fourth vial is poured into the sun and men are scorched with great heat. Some also apply this literally, but the symbolical meaning is to be preferred. There can be no doubt that the powers of nature will also bear witness to the wrath of God. Famines, droughts, great floods, volcanic disturbances, great and widespread earthquakes and other physical phenomena will occur throughout these days of tribulation. However, the sun here is not the physical sun, but means, as under the fourth trumpet, the supreme authority governing them (the Roman empire). Under the fourth trumpet great moral darkness came upon all; here it is fearful, fiery agony "scorched with great heat." The government, Satan-ruled as it is, becomes now the source of the most awful torment to those who are under its dominion. God, in judgment and in His wrath, permits those terrible things to come to pass. Everything under these vial judgments will become more aggravated than under the trumpet judgment.

Verses 10-11. Bowl five

Revelation 16:10-11.

Under the fifth trumpet we saw the star fallen from heaven. It synchronizes with Revelation 12:7-12 - Satan cast out of heaven. Then Satan fallen from heaven gave his power and authority to the beast, the head of the empire. Here the throne (not seat) of the beast is dealt with. His throne and his kingdom are deluged with wrath. All becomes darkness.

Verse 12. Bowl six

Revelation 16:12.

Once more the river Euphrates is mentioned. It dries up when the sixth bowl is poured out so that the way of the kings of the east (literal: from the rising of the sun) might be prepared. We have hinted before at the correspondence between the trumpet judgments and the pouring out of the vials. This now becomes very marked, for under the sixth trumpet the river Euphrates is also mentioned. There the forces which keep back hostile powers are removed and here the river is dried up.

As already stated the Euphrates was the boundary of the Roman empire and the land of Israel. It is a kind of barrier which separates the west from the east. This barrier symbolized by the river Euphrates is now completely removed, so that the kings from the sunrise can invade the land. This invasion is also seen in connection with the sixth trumpet. The nations must gather from all quarters in and about Palestine. We find much of this revealed in the Old Testament and it

would be strange if the Revelation were silent on so important an event. Ezekiel describes a great invader, a confederacy of nations (Ezekiel 38:1-23; Ezekiel 39:1-29). Gog, Magog, the Prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech, Tubal, Persia, Cush and Put are mentioned as forming this confederacy. The term “Kings of the sunrise” may even mean the far Eastern Asiatic nations, like China and Japan. The drying up of the Euphrates seems therefore to mean the removal of the barrier, so that the predicted gathering of the nations may take place (Joel 3:2). What began under the sixth trumpet is consummated when the sixth vial is poured out. It is an act of judgment-wrath, while at the same time these opposing nations are gathering for the great day of God Almighty.



The Three Frogs – The Kings of the east might be prepared

Some Demons Look Like Frogs

“I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs

leap from the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.” Revelation 16:13a NLT



The Three Frogs

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.” (Revelation 16:13).

A frog captures its prey with his tongue, which may symbolize the counterfeit gift of tongues that is sweeping the world today. Please remember that miracles, including the gift of tongues, prove only one thing – supernatural power. And the Bible informs us that supernatural power can be from either God or Satan. Satan, who can pose as an angel of light from heaven (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), will utilize supernatural miracles so effectively that almost the entire world will be deceived and follow him (Revelation 13:3). At the present, he is using the counterfeit gift of tongues to join together churches and religions of all kinds – including pagans and spirit worshipers.

The purpose for the gift of tongues was to communicate the gospel in a known language. It is not to mutter or babble unintelligible sounds, but rather to have power for preaching. This is why Jesus said, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The Bible warns that we must test the spirits (1 John 4:1). If they do not agree with the Bible, they are counterfeit spirits (Isaiah 8:19, 20). Also, the true gifts of the Holy Spirit are never given to one who deliberately and knowingly

disobeys God (Acts 5:32). The true gift of tongues is a miraculous ability to speak foreign languages unknown by the speaker who is preaching (Acts 2:4-12). The true gift of tongues was needed at Pentecost because 17 language groups were in the crowd and the Hebrew disciples needed to communicate the gospel to them.

(16:13-16. Third Parenthesis)

16: 13-16. The three frogs

Verses 13-14, 16. Satanic trinity and Armageddon

Verse 15. Warning to the remnants

16:17-21. The seventh bowl

Verses 17-18. The consummation of judicial wrath

Verses 19-21. The results of God's wrath

Revelation 16:13-21.

Just as we had a parenthetical vision between the sixth and seventh seal, and between the sixth and seventh trumpet, so we find here a very brief one between the sixth and seventh vial judgments. Armageddon is not yet, but it now comes in view. Unclean spirits, like frogs, creatures of the slimy, evil-smelling swamps and of the night, now proceed out of the mouth of the trinity of evil. The dragon is Satan; the beast, the political head of the empire, and the false prophet, the Antichrist. Satanic influences, emanating from him and his two master-pieces are then at work; and they are of such a nature that we cannot fully understand them. They are the spirits of demons, working miracles.

The seventh angel pours his vial into the air. This is Satan's sphere. His power and dominion are now dealt with in wrath. While Satan was cast out of heaven, he may still maintain part of the atmosphere immediately above the earth, thus upholding his claim as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). A great voice declares "It is done." All that follows shows that the climax is reached. The judgment shown is sweeping everything. A great earthquake as under the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet takes place. The great city Babylon is divided into three parts; the cities of the nations fall. It is the hour of collapse, when the

stone from above does its smiting work (Daniel 2:1-49). “It is done!” The Lord has come. The nineteenth chapter will furnish us the particulars.

Judgment of Babylon

Chapters 17- (18)

Babylon, the Harlot, and Her judgment

1. *The description of the woman* (Revelation 17:1-6)
2. *The angel's interpretation* (Revelation 17:7-15)
3. *The desolation of the whore* (Revelation 17:16-18)
4. *The angelic announcement* (Revelation 18:1-3)
5. *The call to separation* (Revelation 18:4-5)
6. *Her pride and destruction* (Revelation 18:6-8)
7. *Lamentation and jubilation* (Revelation 18:9-20)
8. *Her utter and eternal destruction* (Revelation 18:21-24)

17:1-6. The vision of the harlot, ecclesiastical Babylon

Verses 1-5. The harlot and her identity

Verse 6. The woman and her crimes

Revelation 17:1-6.

Babylon was mentioned for the first time in this book in Revelation 14:8; her fall was then anticipated. In two chapters we have a description of her and the details of her overthrow and complete destruction. Babylon is seen as a great, world-wide ecclesiastical, political and commercial system, and her dwelling-place, from where she exercises authority, is a great city, which is the seven-hilled city Rome. There are many who believe that the literal Babylon is in view here in these two chapters. It is claimed that literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates is to become once more a large city and the seat of government during the end of this age. Literal Babylon never was a part of the Roman empire, and as the Babylon of Revelation 17:1-18; Revelation 18:1-24 is seen in closest identification with the empire, and for a time at least is at its center and capital, the Babylon in Asia is ruled out at once. Rome was the great center of the

Roman empire and Rome will once more become the seat where the woman pictured in this chapter will exercise her authority.

In the first part of this chapter we have a description of the great harlot Babylon. Who, then, is this woman, branded a harlot, whom one of the seven angels who poured out the vials showed to John? She represents the papal system in its final power and control in the world. We shall see how this assertion is fully confirmed by the words of this chapter.

We saw in the church-message to Thyatira, which stands for the papacy and its great corruption, that Rome is pictured as the woman Jezebel, corresponding to the woman in the parable of the leaven. And of Thyatira it is said "she repents not." This shows that Rome will continue in her corrupt ways to the end, till judgment overtakes her. She is to be cast into great tribulation (Revelation 2:22).

When the true Church is caught up, the papal system, as we call it, the Roman Catholic "church" will see a great revival. For a time she has been stripped of the temporal power she once had, but it will be restored to her. Along with the revival of the Roman empire there will be a revival of papal Rome. But we must look very briefly at some of the descriptions of this woman, the harlot. "She sitteth upon many waters." We find the interpretation in Revelation 17:15. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues." Rome even now can boast of her children among all nations. She gets her support from the whole world. And when she gets her revival she will have a still greater dominion. The kings of the earth will yield once more to her spiritual fornication. Then John saw the woman upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Who is the Beast she rides? It is the first beast of chapter 13, the revived Roman empire. She becomes identified with that empire. Her attire is purple and scarlet and she is decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. The pope and his cardinals wear these colours. Purple and scarlet are the leading colours displayed in great Romish celebrations; gold, precious stones and pearls describe her enormous wealth and dazzling glory, so attractive to the natural man. And in her hand was a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

How clearly this describes papal Rome. Her service, called worship, her rituals, her splendid edifices, etc., all are fair to behold and pleasing to the eye, like a golden cup. But inside we find her filthiness in doctrine and in practices. She encourages sin by her indulgences. With the celibacy there is also filth connected. And then the vileness and abomination of the confessional. Her shameless character is written upon her forehead. The true Church is to have His name upon the forehead and the great harlot-system bears an inscription.

17:7-18. The harlot and her doom

Verses 7-14. The instrument of her doom

Revelation 17:7-15.

The interpreting angel told John who the beast is, the beast, that was, and is not, and yet is (Revelation 17:8). It is the Roman empire as stated before, it was, in an imperial form in John's day. In the fifth century, A.D., it ceased existing as imperial Rome; it is not. But it is to be again, a revival which is here described as coming out of the pit of the abyss (chapter 13). Revelation 17:9 shows Rome (seven mountains), where the woman sitteth. Therefore, Rome speaks of "the See of the Papacy," and "See" is derived from the Latin *Sedes*, which means seat or throne.

The seven kings or heads in Revelation 17:10, mean different forms of government of the Roman empire. Five are fallen; these were kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs and military tribunes. These are past forms of government. But in John's day the empire had the imperial form of government. This is the meaning of "one is." The other and final form of the Roman empire "is not yet come." That is in John's day it had not yet come. It is the Satanic revival and control of the empire as we saw it in chapter 13. And the eighth head, which goeth into perdition, is the man who heads the empire, the little horn, which Daniel saw on the ten-horned beast. The ten horns in Revelation 17:12-13 are kings. They correspond to the ten toes on Nebuchadnezzar's image and the ten horns on the fourth beast which Daniel saw coming out of the sea. And these ten kings yield their power and strength unto the beast. In Revelation 17:14, their awful future is seen. We shall see this more fully in Revelation 19:11-21. They are going to make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb, who is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, will overcome them. With Him are the called, the chosen and the faithful, that is the redeemed, who come with Him and are manifested when He appears.

Verses 15-18. The account of her doom

Revelation 17:16-18.

The woman rides the beast for a short time only. She will not be long successful in her regained power. The ten horns, the ten kingdoms, and the beast hate her and turn against the whore. ("And the Beast" is not in the Authorized Version; it is added in the Revised Version and belongs rightfully in the text.) First they were all for her and now they unite in making her desolate and naked and burn her with fire. But more than that "and shall eat her flesh," just as Jezebel was

eaten by the dogs. It is God in His righteous judgment who decreed her desolation in this way.

Chapter 18

18:1-24. Judgment of commercial Babylon

Verses 1-8. Her destruction announced

Revelation 18:1-3.

Babylon is now seen under another aspect. In the former chapter we have the religious centre of Rome and her wicked idolatries, in the present chapter it includes also the whole system of apostate Christendom in its social and commercial aspect, the so-called “Christian civilization” in its final apostate condition and doom. Papal Rome in her short revival becomes the head of apostate Christendom and controls everything till her appointed doom comes upon her. While we saw in the preceding chapter the desolation of the whore by the ten kings and the beast, here we see how God views her and that He dethrones this system in His judgment. A strong angel comes down to announce her doom and to lay bare her inner and most awful corruption. A strong descending Angel whose glory lightened the earth, shows what the boasting thing, she, who bore the blessed name of Christ, has become. (This angel may represent the Lord Himself. If this is correct we have the third manifestation of our Lord in the garb of an angel: 8:3 in His priestly dignity; 10:1 in His royal dignity and here as the herald and executor of the vengeance of God upon Babylon.) She is seen to be the habitation of demons. Even now behind all the denials of the doctrine of Christ and the false doctrines which mark the onward march of the predicted apostasy, demons are the leaders (1 Timothy 4:1).

And the nations drank eagerly her cup and the kings committed fornication with her. These kings are not the ten kings of the Empire for they are used in the judgment of the whore, while the kings mentioned here bewail her destruction (Revelation 18:9). And with the system there was connected great commerce; merchants through her became rich.

Revelation 18:4-5.

God always calls out His true children from that which is evil. His own must be a separate people. Saints in past centuries have heard this call and left behind the Romish abominations and thousands sealed their testimony with their blood. And in these days in which our lot is cast, days of increasing signs, heralding as never before the approaching end and the home call of His people to meet Him in the air, in these days God demands the separation of His true children.

Christendom is becoming daily more and more the religious camp of apostasy. And, therefore, He calls: "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). He who remains in that which denies His Name, is partaker of her sins (Revelation 18:4; compare with 2 John 1:10-11). As all drifts back to Rome and the coming political and religious confederacy, this final Babylon looms up; God's people must hear that call. To whom is this call addressed? Undoubtedly to the remnant of God's ancient people, the believing remnant and also to that large number of Gentiles who hear the final message, the gospel of the kingdom.

Revelation 18:6-8.

Like ancient Babylon, the whole apostate system, Rome and all her offspring, was filled with pride. She was lifted up in all her earthly glory and now God breaks her completely. "She shall be utterly burned with fire." As her smoke is to arise forever and ever (Revelation 19:3) it is possible that the proud city, Rome, the centre of the system of apostasy and commerce, will be destroyed by volcanic action, and where the seven-hilled city once stood there may be instead an immense crater, testifying through the millennium of God's righteous retribution. In view of the volcanic conditions on the Italian peninsula this is more than possible.

Revelation 18:9-20.

And now follows the great and universal lamentation over the destruction of the great world-system. There is weeping and wailing when at last this anti-Christian civilization, all Christendom united with Rome, and for a time controlling the commerce of the world, is wiped out by the hand of God. The kings, the merchants, the ship masters, the company in ships and sailors, all are seen mourning, weeping and wailing. The destruction of the system and of its proud city affects them all. They bewail their great loss. Notice twenty-eight things are mentioned by them. The first is gold and the last is the souls of men. How this describes Rome! She is the trafficker in souls and the destroyer of souls as well. And in studying the articles of the commerce of apostate Christendom we notice that these are nearly all articles of luxury. The greatest panic has then come and there will be no recovery of the market. The rich men will weep and howl for their misery is come upon them (James 5:1). See also Zephaniah 1:11; Zephaniah 1:15.

Heaven is called to rejoice over her, and three classes are mentioned (Revised Version), saints, apostles and prophets. "For God hath judged your judgment of her." This is the better rendering. The judgment which the saints pronounced on her is now executed. The next chapter shows us more fully the rejoicing heavens.

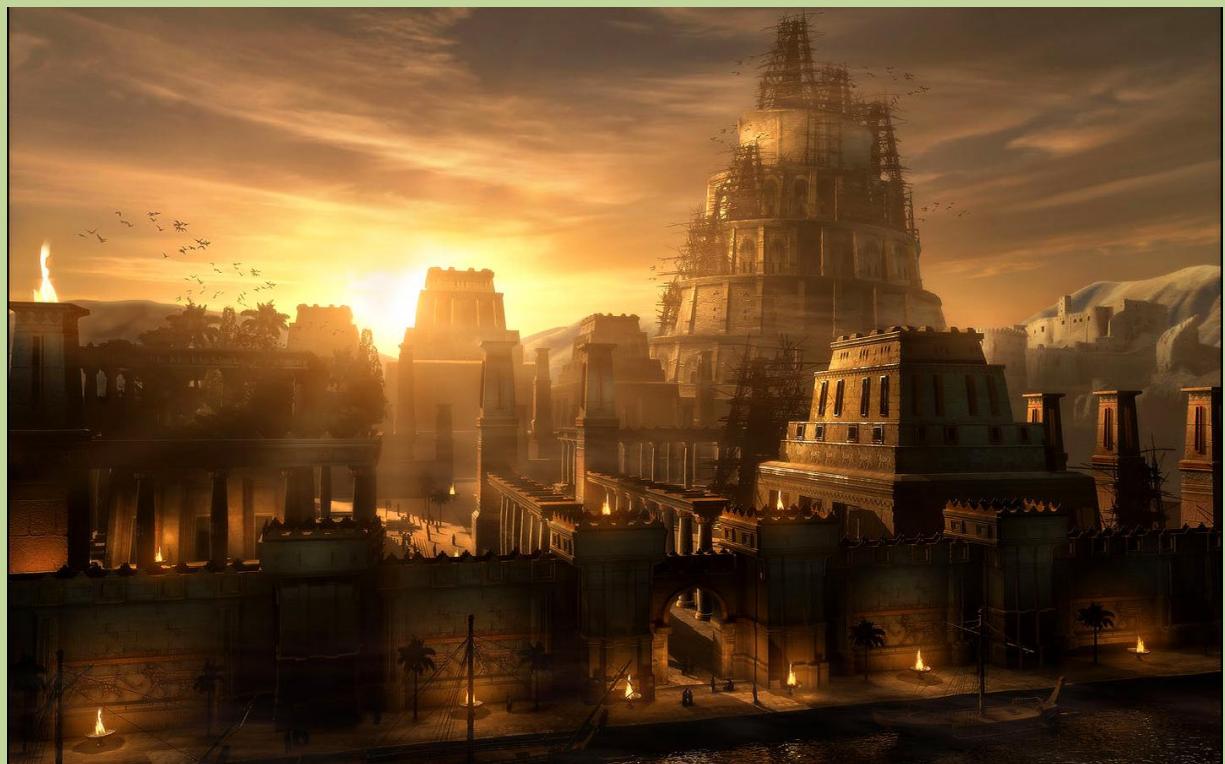
Verses 20-24. Her destruction is effected

Revelation 18:21-24.

In Jeremiah 51:60-64 we read that Seraiah was commissioned by Jeremiah to attach a stone to the book containing the prophet's words and to cast it into the Euphrates. "And thou shalt say, thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her and they shall be weary." Here an angel took up a millstone and cast it into the sea, showing by this action the complete and final destruction of the wicked system and the equally wicked city. And what revelation there is in the statement, "for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." In chapter 20 we read that the old serpent deceives the nations. Sorceries, wicked spirits, demon-powers blinded the eyes of the nations to follow Rome's seductive lure. And thus it is with a lifeless, spiritless Protestantism and its bloodless gospel. The sorceries of Rome, the demons underneath it all, attract apostate Christendom so that all will be united in the great, final Babylon.

So that we may not question that both chapters refer to Rome, though the entire apostate Christendom is also in view, her blood-guiltiness is mentioned once more.

Babylon



Babylon in Revelation Chapter 18

The focus of the previous chapter was about the judgment of the harlot religious system that rode the Beast. The main focus of this chapter will be about the judgment of the Babylonian counterfeit kingdom of God called “Babylon the Great”. Babylon represents all world government and religious systems under Satan. They have been in organized rebellion against God since their conception at the tower of Babel under Nimrod. This rebellion will climax with the end time world government and religion that will have its headquarters located at Babylon, Iraq. The supernatural being behind this rebellion against God is the counterfeit god of this world system (2 Co 4:4). This chapter tells us about the world kingdom Satan fully establishes when he is allowed total control over the earth for 3 ½ years. The chapter also tells us about the judgment upon this satanic kingdom and religion from the real God in heaven.

This chapter in Revelation can be better understood by also knowing the other main prophecies about Babylon given in the Bible. **Isaiah and Jeremiah also cover Babylon in depth.** The passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah are below with some comments to help explain them:

The Prophecies of Isaiah against Babylon:

Isaiah 13:

- 1. The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.*
- 2 Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.*
- 3 I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.*
- 4 The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.*
- 5 They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.*
- 6 Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.*

Notice that during the “**Day of the Lord**” this army comes to destroy the land of Babylon. The “Day of the Lord” is the time of destruction on the earth in the last days before God’s kingdom.

- 7 Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:
8 And they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.
9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

This is not history; it is talking about the future “Day of the Lord”. We have the same references to the sun, moon and stars as we do in Joel and the Olivet discourse. We know of no time in history when these things happened and there certainly was no time that all sinners were destroyed out of the land of Babylon. There have always been sinners in the land of Iraq and in the world’s religious and political systems, so the prophecy could not have been fulfilled in the past and is still future.

- 11 And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
12 I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.*

The world will be punished for its evil and there will be so few men left that men will be rarer than gold.

- 13 Therefore I will shake the heavens, and **the earth shall remove out of her place**, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.*

In the day of the Lord’s anger, the earth will be removed out of her place. Many other prophecies indicate that the earth in the end times will be thoroughly shaken and the surface of the earth will be changed. It should be clear that these passages are not speaking about the Babylonian empire of the past.

- 14 And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.
15 Every one that is found shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined unto them shall fall by the sword.
16 Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their*

houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

17 Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it.

18 Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

The Medes will be among those who destroy Babylon. They were people north of Iraq. The Kurds are descendants of the Medes. When the northern armies come against Babylon, it is reasonable to assume that the Kurds will fight with them.

19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

20 It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

21 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

22 And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

This passage was never fulfilled, since the area of Babylon is inhabited even today. The passage specifically calls it the beauty of Chaldees. The Chaldeans lived in Iraq. Arabians do pitch their tents in south-east Iraq and will in the kingdom of the Beast that will extend beyond Iraq. Those who think the passages about Babylon are describing the destruction of the United States or Europe ignore many such passages. **The Arabians do not pitch tents in the United States or in Europe unless they are on a camping vacation.** Zechariah chapter five makes it clear that wickedness will have a house built for her in the last days in the land of Shinar: “where it shall be established, and set there upon her own base”. **The plain of Shinar is in Iraq. The base it speaks of is the same site as the tower of Babel. On this base, a temple will be built for the Beast.**

Zechariah describes the move of the Beast Kingdom world headquarters from Europe to Babylon Iraq.

Zechariah 5:

6 And I say, 'What is it?' And he saith, 'This—the ephah that is coming forth.' And he saith, 'This is their aspect in all the land.

7 And lo, a cake of lead lifted up; and this is a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah.'

8 And he saith, 'This is the wicked woman.' And he casteth her unto the midst of the ephah, and casteth the weight of lead on its mouth.

9 And I lift up mine eyes, and see, and lo, two women are coming forth, and wind in their wings; and they have wings like wings of the stork, and they lift up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.

10 And I say unto the messenger who is speaking with me, 'Whither are they causing the ephah to go?'

11 And he saith unto me, 'To build to it a house in the land of Shinar.' And it hath been prepared and hath been placed there on its base.

Isaiah chapter 14 also has much to say about Babylon and we will be checking out these passages on Babylon.

Isaiah 14:

1 For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

2 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3 And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

God will have mercy on Jacob (Israel). The Babylonians took Israel captive in the past and it is likely to happen again to some extent in the end times. The prophecy indicates the people in Babylon who do not die will become servants in Israel during the kingdom age.

4 That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

When the Antichrist Beast sets up his kingdom at Babylon, he will apparently build a **golden city** for himself.

5 The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.

6 He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

When the Lord destroys Babylon, none will hinder him. Notice **this leader smote the people in wrath and ruled the nations in anger**. This is the man indwelt by Satan. He will rule the world for the last 3 ½ years before an end time rebellion from the north destroys his kingdom just before the return of Jesus.

7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

8 Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

9 Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

The world will have peace when Satan is cast down to the pit. Even the kings of the earth in hell will be stirred up and mock him at his fall into the pit.

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Isaiah here describes the fall of Lucifer (Satan) out of heaven. When Satan is cast out of heaven, he incarnates the body of the dead world leader and they ascend out of the pit. He will exalt himself above the angels and play God. We are told in this book of Revelation and in Daniel that the Beast is given almost total control of the earth for 3 ½ years. God is going to give Satan his wish to be like God on the earth but Satan as god in a man will bring the world to total destruction. Jesus said unless he curtails these days no flesh would be saved (Mat 24:22).

15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

The prophecy leaves no doubt that this man will cause great destruction on the earth during the time of his power. All will wonder why they thought this Satan incarnated man was God after they see him cast down to the pit.

18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

The scriptures indicate this man will not be buried but he and his false prophet will be cast into the Lake of Fire alive. There is some mystery here since the previous passage says he will be brought down to hell (Hades). Yet, here and in Revelation 19:20, it says he will not dwell in Hades but he will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire. Our lack of understanding does not make the passages conflict. The previous passage could be talking about the spirit of Satan who incarnated the man, because we know from scripture that Satan will be cast into the pit for a thousand years. Satan does not go into the Lake of Fire until after the thousand years are over. Satan deceives the nations again at the end of the millennial reign.

Another explanation could be that this supernatural man called the Beast will pass through Hades on his way to the dimension known as the Lake of Fire. The Lake of Fire could be the final phase of a downward spiral for those in the dimension of the dead. Over one thousand years later, Satan, death and hell itself are also cast into the Lake of Fire as well as all who are not written in the book of life. The Beast and False Prophet will still be alive in the Lake of Fire at that time. (Rev 20:10, Rev 20:14,15)

21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

At the time Satan and his Beast are cut off, all the children of Satan will be slaughtered. No one who chooses to take the mark of the Beast will go into the kingdom of God on earth. This passage should make it abundantly clear that not all humans are children of God.

22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off

from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.

23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

The Assyrian will be broken when he comes against Israel. From this passage some believe the Beast Antichrist is likely to be from the Assyrian tribe. This leader will control the Assyrian people that will come against Israel in the last days. The Assyrians dwelled in north Iraq and areas north of modern day Iraq. Even if the Antichrist turns out to be an Assyrian that does not mean the Antichrist will be a Muslim because not all Assyrians are Muslims and also because at this point the Antichrist will be worshipped by all throughout the world that reject Jesus.

The prophecies of Jeremiah about Babylon:

Jeremiah 50:1 The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

The word of the Lord comes against the land of the Chaldeans. Bible scholars agree that the **Chaldeans lived in the land that is today identified as Iraq.**

2 Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

3 For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

Bel and Merodach were the Satanic gods of Babylon. In the last days, Babylon continues in idol worship when an image of the Beast is set up in Jerusalem and worshiped. Jeremiah and Isaiah indicate that **Babylon will be destroyed by a nation or nations from the north.** When the Babylonian Empire fell in ancient

days to the Medes from the north it was not destroyed, so the prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.

4 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God.

5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

*6 My people hath been lost sheep: **their shepherds have caused them to go astray**, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.*

7 All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

8 Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

The leaders of Israel have led many astray. The world history of the Jews confirms what was written. In the past, some in the Christian church claimed they were only doing God's will in killing and persecuting the Jews. Now Islam is saying the same thing. The Jews will have a false sense of security under the last world leader and may even dwell in his kingdom for a time while it rises among the nations as the seat of world government. God will tell His people to get out of Babylon before He destroys her and He will provide the means for their escape. God is telling those who come out to lead the rest of the Jews of the world to safety.

*9 For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon **an assembly of great nations from the north country**: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.*

10 And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD.

This passage is consistent with Isaiah that an assembly of great nations will come from the north to destroy Babylon.

11 Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls;

12 Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a

dry land, and a desert.

13 Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.

14 Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD.

15 Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her.

16 Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.

17 Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

18 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.

19 And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.

20 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

Verse 19 and 20 are clearly saying that God will bring Israel back to their land and take away their sins. The apostle Paul said that all Israel will be saved after the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. This can only happen when God reveals himself to Israel in the last days.

21 Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee.

22 A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction.

23 How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!

Babylon is named the hammer of the whole earth because the Antichrist and his kingdom were used by Satan to smash the earth. The passage indicates Babylon will be smashed because she hammered the world.

24 I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and

thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD.

25 The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans.

Babylon will be destroyed because she will oppose the Lord God. He will deal with those rebels in the end days in the land of the Chaldeans (Iraq).

26 Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left.

27 Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.

28 The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple.

The Antichrist Beast that sets up his kingdom from Babylon has desecrated the temple in Jerusalem and this event started this time of vengeance from the Lord God Almighty. The passage indicates that the Jews that flee from Babylon will inform Israel that this is the vengeance the prophets wrote about. It comes because of the Beast's desecration of God's temple in Jerusalem.

29 Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.

30 Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD.

31 Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee.

32 And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.

The hallmark of Satan and his Antichrist Beast is pride. The sin of pride prevails in the cities of his counterfeit kingdom and God will destroy them all. Notice God is against the proud. God is against all those who set themselves up as their own God.

33 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go.

34 Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

35 A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men.

36 A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed.

37 A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed.

38 A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.

39 Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

40 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

God says here and in other passages of scripture that no man will ever abide in this land again. When in the past was Babylon ever overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah? It has never happened, but it will and next we see how:

41 Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

42 They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon.

43 The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail.

44 Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?

45 Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitation desolate with them.

46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is

heard among the nations.

Here we see that the nations that come against Babylon not only come from the north but they also come from the coasts of the earth. The shepherd that will stand before God can only be Jesus; it will not be the Beast. When Babylon is taken the whole earth will be moved, all cities will fall, and the cry will be heard among all the nations. This occurs at the pouring out of the seventh vial judgment in Revelation. This cry among the nations will be fully described in this chapter of Revelation.

Jeremiah 51:

1 Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind;

2 And will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about.

3 Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host.

4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets.

Babylon, as well as being the religious, political and economic kingdom of a counterfeit god, is also a physical location on the earth. The passage says these people are slain in the land of the Chaldeans (Iraq).

5 For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.

6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense.

Those who think God is done with Israel need to read this passage; it says “Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah”. When God stands up for His people, they are to flee out of religious and political Babylon or they will partake of her judgments.

7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for

her pain, if so be she may be healed.

9 We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.

The whole world has been deceived by the lies that came from the kingdom of the Beast Antichrist and the False Prophet. The nations soon become aware that Babylon is not the promised “kingdom of God”. The nations have been told the truth by God’s angels and they are angry. They are coming with great armies to destroy the Kingdom of the Beast at Babylon. The passage says that Babylon will fall suddenly and be destroyed. This is probably because of the invasion from the north against the kingdom as well as direct judgment from God when a meteorite hits the city of Babylon.

10 The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

11 Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.

“The spirit of the kings of the Medes” is most likely the kings of the north and east that come against Babylon in the last days to destroy it. God raised up this destroying army from many nations because the Antichrist defiled His temple and His holy name in Jerusalem.

12 Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.

13 O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.

Verse 13 is the main verse that leads some to the false belief that Babylon is Rome or New York City.

Babylon is said here to dwell upon many waters and Iraq does not fit their view of a nation sitting on many waters. The original Babylonian empire did sit on three seas and the kingdom of the Beast might as well. In any case, most of the world’s shipping today is in close proximity to Iraq. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flow through her as well. Babylon in the last days might again have access to the sea through the supernatural powers of the Beast or through the earth upheavals that occur in prior earthquakes spoken about in Revelation.

Also keep in mind that "dwelling on many waters" could just mean the kingdom called Babylon will consist of many nations. As we read in Rev 17:15 "many waters" can really mean many peoples, nations and tongues.

14 The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee.

15 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

16 When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

17 Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

18 They are vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

19 The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name.

20 Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;

21 And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider;

22 With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid;

23 I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers.

This passage is talking about how the Lord will break all nations and peoples that come against Israel.

24 And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.

25 Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.

26 And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.

God says Babylon is a destroying mountain that destroyed all of the earth. He

says Babylon will be desolate forever. Today this area is still occupied.

27 Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers.

28 Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.

29 And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.

The kings of the north and east come against her and she will become a land without an inhabitant.

30 The mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken.

31 One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end,

32 And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.

33 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.

34 Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicacies, he hath cast me out.

35 The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say.

36 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.

37 And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.

38 They shall roar together like lions: they shall yell as lions' whelps.

39 In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the LORD.

40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he

goats.

The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor. A threshing floor is a place where wheat is beaten to remove the impurities. The purpose of God allowing Satan's counterfeit kingdom of God to come on earth is to separate the wheat from the chaff. The passage refers to Nebuchadnezzar because he was a foreshadow of the Beast Antichrist. The passage again says Babylon will become a foul place without inhabitant except for some nasty creatures.

41 *How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!*

42 *The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof.*

43 *Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby.*

If it still is not clear, God says once more that no man will dwell in the land or even pass near it. This land will probably become a radioactive wasteland after the wars.

44 *And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall.*

Bel is Satan. What he took for his possession God will take back. Satan in the Beast was a counterfeit God for 42 months. The verse indicates that during the Beast's power over the nations as their god, they came to him to give of their wealth.

45 *My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.*

46 *And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land; a rumour shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler.*

47 *Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.*

48 *Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD.*

49 *As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.*

God again warns his people to get out of her. He says it will start with rumors. A year or two later, there will be violence and then civil war in the land and then the invasion from the North. All the slain of the earth could not possibly fall at Babylon. A better paraphrasing of the passage might say, “The Babylonian counterfeit kingdom ruled by the Beast will be responsible for all those slain on the earth during the period ruled by Babylon the Great”.

50 Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind.

51 We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the LORD'S house.

The most holy place in the temple is defiled by strangers. This is when the “day of wrath” begins.

52 Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan.

53 Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

54 A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans:

This could be talking about pride, or it could be talking about military space platforms, or both. One thing that is evident is that this destruction comes in the land of the Chaldeans from God and there will be no escape.

55 Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered:

56 Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite.

57 And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts.

58 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. And this Seraiah was a quiet prince.

60 So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon.

61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;

62 Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

Thousands of years have passed since this prophecy and the land is not yet desolate. The bulk of this prophecy will be fulfilled at the second coming of Jesus.

63 And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:

64 And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

If there remains any doubt in anyone's mind where Babylon is, God marks the spot when he tells Jeremiah to cast the prophecies of her judgments into the midst of the Euphrates. The Euphrates River flows through Babylon, Iraq. Anyone who still thinks Babylon is the United States or Europe has not been paying attention and has preconceived prejudices without any foundation in scripture.

Now that we have lightly examined the major prophetic scriptures about Babylon by the Old Testament prophets, we can have a better handle on the scriptures in Revelation that also talk about the judgment of the Beast's counterfeit kingdom of God called "Babylon the Great".

Revelation Chapter 18 in short:

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

After the judgment of Mystery Babylon that John described in chapter 17, a

powerful angel comes down from heaven with glory that is so bright it lights up the earth. The angel announces with a mighty voice that the administration of Satan is fallen. Satan's counterfeit kingdom has been judged by God and has fallen before Him. It has become the habitation of devils (Satan's angels) and every foul spirit (demons) and a prison for every unclean and hateful bird (all the evil offspring of Satan). The physical place spoken of as "Babylon the Great" is the headquarters of the kingdom set up by the Beast that rules over the earth in the last days. It includes the city of Babylon, but the area probably covers all of Iraq, and much more land area as well. There also is a wider meaning that goes beyond just the physical location. This is talking about the coming judgment on those who joined with this counterfeit kingdom of God that rules over the world.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

All the nations on earth bought into the lies that God was in Babylon and His kingdom had come. The government of the Beast implemented a plan of world trade that made the merchants of the earth very rich.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

We also saw in Isaiah and Jeremiah that God tells His people to come out of her so they will not receive her judgments or plagues. These plagues were described in Chapter 16. The plagues will be the vial judgments poured out on the seat of the Beast Kingdom. Exactly how God's people come out is not understood. I expect the prior judgments have something to do with delivering them out, as God's judgments delivered Israel out of Egypt.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

The administration of Satan on the earth killed the saints of God and the cup with the blood of the saints is now full. At the fifth seal judgment it was apparent that the cup was not full but now it is full. So at this point, we are at the end of the tribulation period for God's people. Now the time has come to pay back in spades those who have persecuted God's people.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Satanic Babylon really thinks that she is beyond judgment and that she will see no sorrow like divorced Israel. **This is the ultimate replacement theology. This woman thinks she is a queen. She believes she makes up the real kingdom of God.** There are those in replacement theology in Christianity who say that God is done with Israel and they are the promised kingdom on earth but those that are found in Babylon are so adamant about it that they become prideful. Most of us know that pride goes before a fall and this is exactly what this passage implies.

Those that think that Israel is a widow and say that God is through with Israel and will have no further dealings with the Jews need to understand some crucial facts. **God sent John the Baptist and His Son to the nation of Israel even after they sold themselves into divorcement. God's calling to Israel is irrevocable** (Rom 11:29). When Israel returns to God and accepts the Messiah He chose for her, she will be restored.

Isaiah 50:1 Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorce, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

A

small side study into Hosea and Roman's is in order to clarify that God will restore natural Israel.

Hosea 2:

14 Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

15 And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

The wilderness Hosea is talking about is where the faithful and obedient of Israel flee. Israel is supernaturally protected by God from the Beast in the mountains near Petra.

16 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.

Ishi means “he saves me”. Baali means “my Lord” and also is a variation of

the name Baal (Satan) who was the lord of Israel in her harlotry.

17 For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

Baalim is plural for Baal (the chief pagan god in the time of Hosea). This passage is saying the idols of Baal will not be remembered in Israel any more.

18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

This verse in Hosea is talking about the end of violence on the earth. Even the nature of animals will be changed to be as their nature was before the fall of man.

19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;

22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

The passage is not talking about the grafted in Gentiles as some say. In the context, it is talking about the same people that God rejected for harlotry. The passage is talking about the restoration of Israel. Israel sold herself into divorce. When Israel returns to God He will not reject her because God hates divorce and has provided a way back through the New Covenant! When was the grafted in Church already in the New Covenant ever not His people?

The book of Hosea not only happened as written but **the book is a true prophetic story of God dealing with Israel until the end. These truths demolish the lie that God is done with Israel. All who think that God is done with Israel do not know the prophetic scriptures and have bought into a satanic lie.** Prophetic scripture makes it clear that God chose Israel for His own purposes and that He will rule His kingdom on earth from Jerusalem in an

Israelite kingdom. Most of the leaders of Israel of the past rejected Him and for this reason, **God has delayed the kingdom of the Jews until the nation acknowledges its offense. This delay gave believing Gentiles a time of grace to be grafted into the New Covenant promise that was actually given to Israel and Judah.**

Hosea 5:15:

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

It was always God's plan for those descended from Israel to fulfil the physical kingdom promises to Israel for **his calling is irrevocable**.

Romans 9:4

*Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, **and the service of God, and the promises;***

Romans 11:

25 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.*

26 *And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:*

27 *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

28 *As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.*

29 *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

(Verse 29 means they cannot be changed.)

30 *For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:*

31 *Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.*

32 *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*

From these passages and many others, it is very clear that God plans to restore Israel in the last days.

Revelation 18:8

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Babylon and the kingdom of the Beast will be burned with fire during the “Day of the Lord”. The “Day of the Lord” in judgment is during the last half of a seven-year period for Israel also known as the seventh week of Daniel. The plagues here do not last a literal day of 24 hours. The passage is saying when these things come; they will all come together in a very short time period.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

The kings of the earth have a great time with this phony god and the world government and world trade that he sets up. They will become truly upset when she burns. **These same kings that now lament Babylon rejoiced when Mystery Babylon burned in chapter 17.** Therefore, the two Babylon’s could not be the same. “Mystery Babylon” of chapter 17 is religion that played the harlot with satanic paganism but “Babylon the Great” described in this chapter is a world political, economic and religious system that includes forced worship of the Beast as God.

These kings will not get near her when they see her judgment and see her burn with fire. This implies there is absolutely nothing at all they can do. The “**great city**” described is the rebuilt golden city of the Antichrist Beast that will be built at Babylon in Iraq. This city is the actual final seat of the Beast kingdom of the end times, but the judgment illustrated by this judgment on an actual city also comes on the cities of the whole world. Revelation 16:19 tells us that all the cities of the world will fall at the time of Babylon’s destruction. What occurs at this time is the seventh vial judgment.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

All these products lead many to speculate that Babylon is some city or country other than Babylon, Iraq. Although Babylon, Iraq today is not near fulfilling this prophecy, things there could change quickly if the god of this world sets up his throne and his “Kingdom of God” from that location. He will demand tributes and taxes from the whole world. Babylon will then become a **city of gold** and luxury in very short order.

Isaiah 14:4

That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

These passages may also find some fulfilment in the destruction of the world economic system that under the administration of Satan corrupted the world through the lust of the eyes.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

The merchants of the world and the shipmasters stand a long ways away from her weeping over the riches they will lose. The city is clothed in the garments and jewels of religion and royalty (Purple and Scarlet). It is simply not conceivable that any existing great city in the world could qualify to fulfill these passages. This is a city not yet built.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Heaven and the apostles and prophets rejoice over her destruction, because the world religious and political systems that began at Babylon and that corrupted all government and religion to persecute the people of the promise have now been avenged. **World government and world religion that reaches its pinnacle with forced worship of the Satanic Beast (including Judaism and Christianity in its harlot form) is responsible for killing all the apostles and all the prophets of God.**

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

Consistent with the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah no one will ever live in that area again. This clearly is future since it has never happened. After this destruction from God on the seat of the Beast, no one will ever live in that land again, nor will there be another world kingdom controlled by Satan on the earth.

Those in this world system are the great world leaders of the earth but the power behind these leaders is Satan. The great men of the earth deceive the entire world and teach them to follow the god of materialism and selfishness. They lead the world to believe the god they follow is the creator when in reality the god they follow is a fallen angel known as Satan and the Devil.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

No city or country on earth could possibly qualify to fulfill this verse. This verse is not saying all saints ever killed were killed in a city or a place on earth called “Babylon the Great”. What it is saying is that the religious and political systems that corrupted the earth under the entire administrative rule of Satan is named “Babylon the Great”. **In God’s eyes, the whole administration of Satan is called Babylon and not just the culmination of his kingdom in the end times.**

Satan has been responsible for all those slain on the earth. The satanic administration began at the fall of Adam. However, it first appeared as an organized political and religious entity on the earth after the flood, at Babylon under Nimrod. “Babylon the Great” is the satanic political and religious substitute for the true kingdom of God on earth that God promised through His prophets. This true kingdom is to be ruled from Jerusalem by His Son Jesus.

The prophecy about “Babylon the Great” goes beyond just the location of its birth and death as an actual city. It also reveals the spiritual war on earth that has been waged for six thousand years against the children of light and God’s promises to them. At the earthly culmination of “Babylon the Great” under the false Messiah incarnated by Satan there will be a worldwide lawless counterfeit kingdom of god filled with everything satanic. This pagan Babylonian world system will then be judged by God and will be cast down suddenly and will be found no more. God will then bring in the promised Jewish kingdom of God on earth ruled by Jesus and those that trust in Him.

19. The Return of Christ

Chapters 19-20:6

The Manifestation of the King and the Millennium

1. *Heavenly hallelujahs and the marriage of the Lamb* (Revelation 19:1-6)
2. *Heaven opened and His visible manifestation* (Revelation 19:11-16)
3. *The battle of Armageddon* (Revelation 19:17-21)
4. *The binding of Satan* (Revelation 20:1-3)
5. *The thousand-year reign* (Revelation 20:4-6)

19:1-5. Rejoicing at Babylon’s fall

Verses 1-4. Heaven rejoices

Verse 5. The throne speaks

19:6-10. The marriage of the Lamb

19:6-10. The marriage of the Lamb

Verses 6-8. The wedding

Verses 9-10; The guests

Revelation 19:1-10

Once more we find the significant phrase “after these things” (Revelation 4:1; Revelation 7:1; Revelation 18:1). “After these things”—the things which are described in chapters 17 and 18, the fall of Babylon and the complete destruction of the whore and the system over which she presided and domineered, after these things, voices in heaven are heard again. We were first introduced to the heavens in this book in the fourth chapter.

In Revelation 18:20 we heard the words addressed to heaven, “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.” And now we see heaven rejoicing. “I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, “Hallelujah.” Hallelujah means “Praise ye Jehovah.” This Hebrew word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Four times this word of praise is found in the beginning of this chapter; the Hallelujah times for heaven and earth are imminent. The book of Psalms closes with many hallelujahs; the blessed time which the Psalms so often anticipate, when the earth is judged in righteousness and the glory of the Lord is manifested, is now at hand. The praise here is on account of the righteousness of God exhibited in the judgment of the great whore “which did corrupt the earth with her fornication” and because the blood of God’s servants shed by her is now avenged. The great multitude whose Hallelujah is heard first must be the company of martyrs who died during the tribulation. The souls under the altar and their brethren which were slain later utter this praise now. They are seen as a distinct company from the twenty-four elders. A second hallelujah is uttered by them, while the smoke of the destroyed city goes up forever and ever.

The whole redeemed company, Old and New Testament saints, add their amen and hallelujah to the outburst of praise on account of the execution of the righteous judgment. And they worship God, for it is of the righteousness which accomplished the destruction of the great whore. In the midst of this wonderful and impressive worship-scene the throne begins to be heard. A voice from the throne said: “Give Praise unto God all ye His servants and ye that fear Him both small and great.” And the command is at once obeyed. John hears the fourth hallelujah and it is the greatest, the most magnificent. It is the great hallelujah-chorus of heaven. Like the voice of many roaring waters, like the voice of mighty thunderings, a great multitude saith, “Hallelujah for the Lord our God Omnipotent reigneth.”

Who is this great multitude? In the first verse we heard the Hallelujah of the martyred companies. The twenty-four elders and four living creatures did not join in this first hallelujah. Their hallelujah followed. And now the great outburst of a great multitude. This multitude includes all the redeemed in glory. And they rejoice and give glory for an additional reason which is made known for the first time in this book. The marriage of the Lamb is about to be consummated. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready." The harlot, which claimed to be the bride, being judged, the true bride of Christ is seen in glory. And it is the marriage of the Lamb. His joy is now filled full for He receives her, who is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. The second Man, the last Adam, is joined to her who is to rule and reign with Him.

But who is the bride about to become the Lamb's wife? Some teach that it is Israel to be united with the Lord in the closest bonds. But these expositors forget that the scene is a heavenly one. This marriage does not take place on earth where the faithful remnant looks up, expecting Him to appear for their deliverance, but this marriage is in glory. It is true such relationship is declared to be Israel's in the Old Testament. She was married to Jehovah in a legal covenant and on account of her faithless condition, because Jerusalem played the harlot (Ezekiel 16:35), she was put away. For a time Israel was the wife of Jehovah (Is. 54:1) and then on account of her wickedness became divorced. She will be taken back in the day of her national repentance when the Lord comes. But as one who had been divorced she cannot be a bride again. The bride of Christ to become the Lamb's wife is the Church of the New Testament.

All who accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord since the day of Pentecost constitute the bride of Christ. The Church began on Pentecost and her completion will be the translation to glory (1 Thessalonians 4:17). She is both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, as Eve was of the body of Adam and also his bride. The Church is the nearest and the most beloved object of His loving heart.

But how has she made herself ready? And what does it mean, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white for the linen is the righteousness of the saints"? The grace of God has supplied the robe and the precious blood is her title to glory. In this respect she was ready. But the words here refer us to the judgment seat of Christ, that award seat before which we must appear. Then the hidden things are brought to light and the wood and the hay and stubble are burned (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). Then "every man shall have praise of God" (1 Corinthians 4:5) and what grace accomplished in each one and through each will be manifested. And the clean white linen "is the righteousness of the saints." The word "righteousness" is in the plural. It means more than the

righteousness which we are in Christ or the faith in Him which is counted for righteousness (Romans 4:3). It includes all the blessed results in life and service produced by the Holy Spirit, the practical righteousness of the saints. And yet even these need the washing in that precious blood without which all is unclean and unholy.

And so it is grace after all, as indicated by the word “given” (Revised Version); “it was given to her to be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure.” He himself has made her ready and removed every spot, every wrinkle and every blemish. God grant that we His people may daily meditate on this coming glorious event, the marriage of the Lamb, and walk worthy of such a Lord and such a calling. Once more John is commissioned to write: “Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And who can estimate the blessedness of being in His ever blessed presence, at His table, at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Revelation 19:11-16. Christ’s second advent

Verses 11-14. The conqueror and his victorious army

Verses 15-16. The conqueror and His conquest

And now we reach the great event so often mentioned in the Old Testament, the event for which this world is waiting, the visible manifestation of Him, whom the heavens received, who returns to judge the earth, to receive the promised kingdom and rule over the earth for a thousand years. We have reached the great climax in the Revelation. His own words are now to be fulfilled. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from the heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29-30).

Impressive words--”And I saw heaven opened.” Heaven was opened unto Him when He came out of Jordan at His baptism. While His baptism foreshadowed His death in the sinner’s place, His resurrection and ascension are foreshadowed in coming out of the waters and the open heaven. In heaven at the right hand of God He has been ever since, unseen by human eyes. At last the time has come when God is to make His enemies as the footstool of His feet. Heaven is opened so that He might be revealed in His glorious majesty. And out of the opened heavens He comes forth. He comes as the mighty Victor to judge in righteousness and to make war. “And behold a white horse; and He that sat thereon was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He doth judge and

make war.” The white horse is symbolical of victorious warfare and glorious conquest. When, seven years before the first seal had been opened (6:1), a rider appeared upon a white horse achieving great conquest, it was the false king who was then seen in vision. He is as the beast on earth with the King and their armies to make war with the coming King who comes out of the opened heaven. Glorious sight! He is coming to conquer and to claim His inheritance. The appointed day has come in which God “will judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). Upon His head are many diadems. The saints wear crowns, but He to whom belongs all power in heaven and on earth wears many diadems, encircling His head in dazzling splendor.

“And He had a name written, that no man knew but Himself.” And again it is written, “His Name is called the Word of God.” And on His vesture and on His thigh there is a name written, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” The unknown Name is the name of His essential deity. No human name can express what He is in Himself “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” His Name “the Word of God” refers us to the Gospel of John. As the Word He is the express image of God, that is, He makes God visible. He is the expression of God in His character, His thoughts and counsels. And the third name mentioned, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords,” expresses what He is in relation to the earth.

“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood”--”And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” The blood-dipped vesture has nothing to do with His work on the cross. He is described in Isaiah 63:1-4 as the One who has the day of vengeance in His heart, and this passage in Isaiah is here being fulfilled. The two-edged sword refers us to Isaiah 11:4 : “He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.”

But He is not alone. The armies of heaven follow the great King. They are, like Him, upon white horses and are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. These armies are not angels. It is true, angels will be with Him as He comes, for it is written, then He shall be revealed with His holy angels. Angels will be the reapers in the judgment (Matthew 13:41) when the age ends and they will be used in the regathering of Israel (Matthew 24:31). But the armies here are not angels. They are the glorified saints; the fine linen, white and clean, identifies them fully. In faith and blessed assurance, you, dear reader, and the writer can say, we shall be in that company with Himself as leader. The Son brings His many sons unto glory (Hebrews 2:10). What a sight that will be for the earth-

dwellers! Each in that company bears His own image; each reflects His own glory.

Revelation 19:17-21. Armageddon

Verses 17-18.The great supper of God

Verses 19-21. The total destruction of Christ's foes

And what a sublime vision comes next! An angel is beheld by the Seer standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he summons the birds that fly in mid-heaven to gather themselves to the great supper of God to eat the flesh of the slain. The birds of prey are summoned in anticipation of the battle of Armageddon which is then imminent. And now the hour of judgment has come. An angel, standing in the sun, the place of supreme authority, gives the invitation to the birds of prey to be ready for the feast which a holy and righteous God will have for them. The day of wrath has come. The slain of the Lord shall be many (Isaiah 66:16).

And down on earth there is the greatest gathering of armies the world has ever seen. The beast, the head of the revived Roman Empire, is the commander-in-chief. The kings of the earth are with him. Vast armies camp on all sides. The great valley on the plains of Esdraelon is filled with soldiers. The hills and mountains swarm with armed men. Satan's power has gathered and blinded this vast multitude to the utmost. The unclean spirits, the demons working miracles, have brought them together to the battle of that day. And the hordes from the north, under the Prince of Rosh are coming later. These vast multitudes from the north and beyond Euphrates are described in Ezekiel 38:1-23; Ezekiel 39:1-29. And in that Old Testament prophecy we find a statement which reminds us of the great supper of God in Revelation. "Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves on every side to My sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood" (Ezekiel 39:17). "Thus shall ye be filled at My table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God" (Revelation 19:20).

Zechariah 14:2 is now being fulfilled. While the vast armies are covering valleys and hills, the objective will be Jerusalem. All nations are gathered against her. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." And now as these armies are massed together the great battle of Armageddon takes place. They are ready to make war against Him, who comes through heaven's portals. "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against

those nations" (Zechariah 14:3). The battle does not consume much time. Sennacherib's army was suddenly smitten and they all perished, and here are armies in comparison with which Sennacherib's forces were insignificant. One mighty blow from above, one flash of glory and all their strength and power is gone. The stone has fallen (Daniel 2:1-49). With one blow the dominion and misrule of the Gentiles is at an end.

The kings of the present day might profitably listen to Nebuchadnezzar's letter in Daniel 4:1-37. He began at the times of the Gentiles, and has left this letter to be read by his successors. The words our Lord spoke while on earth "on whom this stone falls it shall grind him to powder" have been fulfilled (Matthew 21:44). Such is the awful fate which "Christian civilization" (?) and "Kultur" (!) and a Christless Christendom is rapidly approaching. And while the armies perish as to the body and God's wrath sweeps the earth clean of the mass of apostates, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel, the beast (the head of the empire) and the false prophet (the second beast of chapter 13), that is the false Messiah, the Antichrist, are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. They were not annihilated, for a thousand years later we still find them there (20:10); and still they are in existence and will ever be as individuals in that place of eternal punishment. And those that were slain as to the body will be raised after the millennium and also share the place with the two, whom they followed and worshipped.

Chapter 20 (Part One)

20. The millennium and final judgment

20:1-3. Satan bound

Verse 1. The vision of the angel

Verses 2-3. The binding of Satan

Revelation 20:1-3.

And now Satan, who was cast out of heaven three and one-half years before the visible and glorious coming of the Lord, and who has been on earth in person, though not beheld by human eyes, is seized to be put into his prison for a thousand years. And the demons, who were liberated by Satan (chapter 9) are likewise shut up in the bottomless pit, though this is not mentioned because it is self-evident. The terms "key" and "great chain" are of course figurative. He is mentioned in all his infamous titles. He is called dragon on account of his horrible cruelty and vileness, the old serpent on account of his maliciousness, guile and deception; he is the devil, the arch-tempter of man, and Satan because

he is the accuser of the brethren, the one who opposed Christ and His people. He is now dethroned as the god of this age, completely stripped of his power; and his dethronement means the complete enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ. And here is the important statement that this being, the once glorious Lucifer, the Son of the morning and light-bearer, who fell through pride, has been the deceiver of the nations.

20:4-6. The saints reign

Verse 4. Classes of saints reigning with Christ

Verses 4d-6. The first resurrection

Revelation 20:4-6.

Thrones are seen next by the Seer. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them.” Daniel also saw thrones in connection with the judgment of the beast, but nothing is said of those occupying the thrones in Daniel’s vision. Here we have the complete revelation, and several times the blessed statement is made that Christ and His saints shall reign with Him for a thousand years. The new age in which all things are put in subjection under His feet, the personal reign of Christ, in which all His redeemed people have a share, begins. It will last a thousand years. Six times we read of the thousand years in this chapter. Because this coming age will last a thousand years it has been called by the Latin word “millennium.” Not a few have made the astonishing declaration that such a period of time during which Christ and His saints reign over the earth has but little foundation in the Scripture.

It is quite true that the only place in which the duration of such an age is given is this great final book of Revelation. And that should be sufficient for any Christian to believe in such an age of a thousand years. However, this age of unspeakable blessing and glory for this earth is revealed throughout the entire Bible. The Old Testament contains hundreds of unfulfilled promises of blessing for Israel, the nations of the earth and even for all creation, which have never seen even a partial fulfilment. Isaiah is full of such promises. In the New Testament there are also passages which clearly teach and point to such an age of glory for this earth. Read Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 8:19-23; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:20; Philippians 2:9-11. What awfully disheartening pessimism it would be if we had to believe that the terrible conditions prevailing on the earth now, conditions which have steadily become worse, were to continue and that man’s work is to remedy them and produce something better. This earth has a bright and glorious future. Nations will some day no longer turn, as they do now, their plowshares into swords, but change their swords into plowshares. Righteousness and peace will surely kiss each

other and creation's curse and travail pains will end. Mercy and truth meet together.

But when? Never as long as the great unfoldings of this book, which we have briefly followed, have not come to pass. There can be no better day for the earth as long as He is absent and not on the throne which belongs to Him. But when He comes, when He has appeared in glory and in majesty, then the earth will find her rest and groaning creation will be delivered. As we do not write on the great blessings and glories to come when He comes, we must refrain from following these things. Here in our book the revelation is given that Christ shall reign for a thousand years and His Saints shall reign with Him.

Let us notice briefly the different classes mentioned who are associated with Christ in His personal reign. The entire company of the redeemed, as we saw them under the symbolical figure of the twenty-four elders, occupying thrones and wearing crowns, are undoubtedly meant by the first statement, "they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." They judge with Him. This is the raptured company whom we saw first in glory in chapters 4 and 5; and we, dear fellow-believer, belong to this company. Then follow the martyrs, whom we saw under the fifth seal (Revelation 6:9-11): "And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God." Then we have a third company. "And I saw those who had not worshiped the beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark on their forehead, or in their hands." These are the other martyrs who were slain during the great tribulation, when the beast set up the image and demanded its worship (Revelation 6:13). They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The first resurrection is passed and all who have part in it reign with Christ, are priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Oh! wonderful grace which has saved us! Grace which has saved us in Christ and through His ever precious blood delivered us from eternal perdition! Grace which saved us from Satan's power, from sin and all its curse! Grace which has lifted into such heights of glory and has made us the sons of God and the joint-heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ! And how little after all we enter into all these things, which ought to be our daily joy and delight. How little we know of the power of the coming glory of being with Christ and reigning with Him!

Chapter 20 (Part Two)

Chapters 20: 7-22:5

After the Thousand Years and the New Jerusalem

- 1. Satan's last revolt (Revelation 20:7-10)*
- 2. The great white throne (Revelation 20:11-15)*
- 3. The eternal state (Revelation 21:1-8)*
- 4. The vision of the holy city (Revelation 21:9-27)*
- 5. The glories of the redeemed (Revelation 22:1-5)*

20:7-10. Satan loosed

Verses 7-9. Satan's last rebellion

Verse 10. Satan's final doom

Revelation 20:7-10.

Satan who was put into the abyss a thousand years before, is now loosed out of his prison. God permits him to come forth once more. Who would have ever thought of such a thing! The archenemy who had done his vile and wicked work among the human race, for a thousand years put at least into the place of perfect restraint, and now loosed once more to continue, for a brief season, his work! And he finds nations ready for his deception, not a few, but a number “as the sand of the sea.” God permits Satan to come out of his prison, so that the absolute corruption of man might be demonstrated. Man has been tried and tested under every possible condition. He has failed in every age. He failed under the law and he failed even more in the grace-dispensation; and now, under the most glorious conditions, during the millennium, when the Lord Himself is known in all the earth and reigns in righteousness, when want and nearly all the sorrows of a ruined creation are banished, when there is peace on earth, man also fails and does not fully respond to a gracious Lord.

But here is a difficulty which many have. Many a sincere post-Millennialist, who has studied the pre-millennial coming of our Lord, has asked this question, “If the whole world is converted during the millennium, how is it then that Satan finds nations ready to side with him after the thousand-year reign of Christ and then leads them on to destructions?” The difficulty is far from being as great as it is generally made. In fact it is easily explained. As far as Israel is concerned, the “all Israel” living, when He comes, the trusting remnant of Israel, they will constitute the blessed nation in possession of all her promised blessings. They are not mentioned as siding with Satan. No more backsliding for that nation. Isaiah 59:20-21 vouches for this.

And the Gentile nations in the beginning of the millennium will also be converted. However, the human conditions of the earth will continue. The nations are not in a glorified state. Marriage will continue. Children will be born during the millennium. Indeed the earth will be populated as never before. Billions of human beings can be sustained upon our planet and they will come into existence by natural generation during the golden age of glory. Wars will be unknown. No longer will the flower of manhood be cruelly murdered by human passion in that legalized horrible thing called war. Earthquakes will no longer sweep thousands upon thousands into an untimely grave, nor can famines and pestilences claim their millions. Nor will there be the great infant mortality. Physical death will no longer be the universal rule, but rather an exception (see Isaiah 65:20).

Now every child born during the millennium of the converted nations comes into the world the same as the children in the present age, it is still true, conceived and born in sin. And it is equally true, they must be born again.

As many children of pious, godly parents in this age are gospel-hardened and live on in sin, though they hear the gospel and see its power, so in the millennium, an enormous multitude will see the glory, live under the best and most glorious conditions the earth has seen since before the fall of man, and yet they will be glory-hardened and only submit to the righteousness of that age and yield obedience through fear, for disobedience to the governing laws of the kingdom on earth, will mean sudden and certain judgment. It is not the obedience produced by a believing, trusting heart, but only a feigned obedience. Three prophetic Psalms which speak of these millennial conditions make this clear, if we consider the marginal reading. "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me, the strangers shall yield feigned obedience unto Me" (Psalms 18:44). "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies yield feigned obedience unto Thee" (Psalms 66:3). "The haters of the Lord yield feigned obedience unto Him, but their time might have endured forever" (Psalms 81:15). Study these Psalms in their millennial bearing. Thus many nations submit while sin is in their heart and in their blindness they long and hope for the day when they may cast off the restraint. And that day comes when Satan is loosed out of the prison to deceive these nations again.

It was the final attempt of the dethroned usurper to regain his lost dominion. For thousands of years, in the all-wise purposes of God, he was permitted to be the prince of the power of the air and the god of this age. We have followed his history in this book and seen how he was cast out of heaven upon the earth where he caused the great tribulation. Then we beheld him stripped of all his power. The kingdoms of the world became the kingdom of Christ and the old

serpent was cast unto the abyss where he remained a thousand years. Loosed for a little season he tried once more to become earth's master. And fire out of heaven devoured the nations who had revolted.

The devil receives his final doom. He is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. He goes to a fixed place, a locality where unspeakable and eternal torment is his portion. This place is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). And all the wicked will share that place. And he finds others there. The first beings who were cast into this final abode were the beast (the emperor of the Roman empire, the little horn of Daniel 7:1-28), and the false prophet (the personal Antichrist, the second beast of chapter 13). They were put there a thousand years before, and as they are there as persons it shows they were not annihilated. And they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever--for the ages of ages--never ending--for all eternity. What a solemn truth this is! Yet men meddle with it and deny future, conscious and eternal punishment. Besides these three persons, the nations who were judged and condemned in the beginning of the millennium, when the Son of Man sat upon the throne of His glory (Matthew 25:31), are also in the Lake of Fire.

20:11-15. The final judgment

Verse 11. The throne and the judge

Verses 12-15. The dead and their judgment

Revelation 20:11-15.

And now we reach the last great judgment scene of God's holy Word. Much confusion prevails among Christians about this judgment. There is no such thing in the Word of God as a universal judgment, nor is there a universal resurrection. Every human being that has died will be raised at some time. Our Lord spoke (John 5:28) of two resurrections, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto judgment. The Revelation speaks of the first resurrection. "This is the first resurrection" (Revelation 20:5). And previously the apostle wrote of a resurrection from among the dead (Philippians 3:11). The first resurrection was finished in the beginning of the millennium. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The rest of the dead come now into view and they are of necessity the wicked dead, who died in their sins, and whose is the resurrection unto judgment.

Some, like "Pastor" Russell, who echoes the evil teachings of others, have invented a third resurrection, a resurrection of the unsaved for a second chance. In the light of this final Bible book there is no room whatever for such a resurrection, which would give the lost another opportunity. Nor does the rest of

the Bible mention such a third resurrection. And this great judgment is not a universal judgment. It is taught that the entire human race, the living and the dead, will appear before this great throne. But this is incorrect, for it saith, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." No living people are there at all. Again the judgment-scene in Matthew 25:31, etc., is spoken of as being the universal judgment and identical with the judgment here in Revelation. But this is another error. In the judgment of Matthew 25:1-46 the dead are not there, but living nations are judged in the beginning of the millennium. And these nations are judged on account of the treatment of the Jewish preachers of the gospel of the kingdom heralded by them during the last seven years of the age. They did not accept the last offer of mercy and that is why they treated the messengers as they did.

Furthermore, the throne which the Son of Man occupies in Matthew 25:1-46 is upon the earth; the throne in Revelation 20:11 comes into view after earth and heaven fled away. The Church and the saints of God are not concerned at all in the judgment of Matthew 25:1-46, nor in the great white throne judgment. They are at that time in His own presence glorified. Every Christian should have these things clearly defined and know that for him, as in Christ, there is no more judgment or condemnation (John 5:24; Romans 8:1). The judgment seat of Christ before which believers have to appear (2 Corinthians 5:10) does not concern their eternal salvation, but their works and rewards.

Who is the occupant of this great white throne? Not God the Father, but God the Son. "The Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). The earth and heaven fled from His face. Sin-stained and defiled as they were they flee away from the face of the Holy One. The great conflagration of 2 Peter 3:7-12 takes place. (See Annotations on 2 Peter 3:1-18.) Fire of judgment swept the earth before the millennium, the day of the Lord, began; but the all consuming fire comes after the millennium. out of that great conflagration there arises a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1).

But what about the millions of saved Israelites and Gentiles who are on the millennial earth? Where are they during this great conflagration? What becomes of them? That they share the eternal blessings and glories in the eternal state is certain. But their abode between the burning of the earth and the calling into existence of the new heaven and the new earth is unrevealed. Speculation on it would be wrong. We should accept the silences of Scripture as much in faith as we accept the promises of God.

And John sees the dead standing before the throne. Books were opened and another book was opened, the book of life. "And the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." The books are symbolical; conscience and memory will speak loudly. Twice we read that

they are judged according to their works. And in the “book of life” none of their names were written, or they would not have been in that company. “All this would seem to show that, though a millennium has passed since the first resurrection, yet no righteous dead can stand among this throng. The suggestion of the ‘book of life’ has seemed to many to imply that there are such; but it is not said that there are, and the words ‘whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire’ may be simply a solemn declaration (now affirmed by the result) that grace is man’s only possible escape from the judgment” (Numerical Bible).

The second resurrection takes place. The sea gives up the dead and death and Hades give up the dead. Hades gives up the soul, and death, used here for the grave, gives up the bodies. Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. Both had come into existence because man had sinned, and, therefore, they are cast into the place where all belongs which is contrary to the holiness and righteousness of God. And then that solemn word! “And whosoever was not found written in the Book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” It corresponds to that other solemn statement in John 3:36. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him.” To be written in the “book of life” means to have life in Christ. Not our works, not our character, not our religiousness, not our tears, our prayers or our service can put our names in the “book of life.” Grace alone can do it, and grace does it, as we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader! is your name written there?

The saints of God are in eternal glory; the wicked dead, the lost, are in an eternal lake of fire and suffer conscious, eternal punishment. And how man, blind, presumptuous man, yea, even such who know God, rise up against this solemn truth, the eternal punishment of the wicked. They accuse God of injustice, as if the judge of all the earth would not do right. That the suffering of the lost differs is obvious. It is eternal, because the evil condition remains unchanged. There is no repentance, no faith, no new birth in hell. As there are different rewards for the faithful service of the saints, so are there different degrees of punishment for the unsaved (Luke 12:47-48). This is the second death, not blotting out of existence, but endless in a separation from God.

21:1-22:5. The City of God and the eternal state

Chapter 21

21:1-8. The eternal state

Verses 1-7. Eternity and the righteous

Verse 8. Eternity and the unrighteous

Revelation 21:1-8.

And now the eternal state comes into view. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and the sea is no more.” This is the revelation concerning the final and eternal state of the earth. “Thou hast established the earth and it abideth” (Psalms 119:90); “But the earth abideth forever” (Ecclesiastes 1:4). These divine statements are now fulfilled. Many Christians have a very vague conception of the eternal state of the earth and the abode of the redeemed. They think of it as a spiritual state destitute of any locality. But it is not so. The earth and the heaven abide as definite places throughout all eternity. What a marvellous fact this is! In Revelation 20:11 we read that the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place. We saw that at that time the great conflagration of which Peter speaks took place, when “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements, shall be dissolved with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10).

But we read in the same chapter “nevertheless we, according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13). During the millennium righteousness reigns upon the earth, but now a state comes for the earth when righteousness shall dwell there. The great burning up meant not an annihilation of the earth and the heavens; God does not annihilate anything, nor does Scripture teach an annihilation of material things and much less the annihilation of human beings, as false teachers claim. The conflagration of the earth and the heaven means their complete purification. The heaven mentioned cannot be the entire heavens; for there is a heaven which cannot be touched by these fires of purification. The heaven is that which surrounds the earth and which was once the peculiar sphere of the great usurper, the prince of the power in the air. And when Peter writes that all this is according to His promise, he has a well-known prophetic statement in Isaiah in mind. “For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I will make, shall

remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.” (Isaiah 66:22. See also Isaiah 65:17).

From this statement we get definite information that the redeemed Israel established upon the new earth will throughout the eternal state be distinct from the saved nations. They will throughout all eternity bear witness of God’s faithfulness as the covenant-keeping God. The new heaven and the new earth are therefore the abodes of the redeemed. The new earth, the eternal glory spot of redeemed Israel and the redeemed nations, and the new Jerusalem will come out of heaven to fill the new earth and the new heaven as well. “And I John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

The new Jerusalem, the holy city, comes into view. During the millennium the city of Jerusalem was known as the place of glory for the earth. Numerous Old Testament predictions were fulfilled. In Revelation 20:9, she is called “the beloved city.” But in Revelation 3:12 we have another Jerusalem mentioned, the same city which John sees coming down out of heaven, the place of the highest glory. It is the abode of the Church in all her glory; the statement “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” establishes this beyond controversy. She is called “holy” for all is holy; and a “city” because the Saints are in blessed communion and fellowship there. In the highest glory she had her abode. But now she is being revealed in all her eternal glory and beauty.

During the millennial reign this wonderful city was above the earth and from there Christ reigned and His saints with Him. But here she comes down out of heaven. A thousand years before the marriage of the Lamb had taken place (19:7-8), and now after a thousand years of unspeakable glory, she is still seen “as a bride adorned for her husband.” And yet all these things are given in figurative language. What will be the reality! The masterwork of God is at last fully manifested; what He accomplished through Him, who left the glory to die on the cross, is made known. The eternal, never ending riches, purchased by Him who was rich and became poor for our sakes, are beginning to be displayed in all their unfading splendour. Then the saints of God will learn to know the full meaning of Ephesians 2:7, “that in the ages to come He might display the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.” “And I heard a loud voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” This is the glorious consummation. It is the goal of a holy, loving God.

In Eden God visited man unfallen, walked and talked with Him. Then sin severed this fellowship. He dwelt in the midst of Israel in the holiest of the tabernacle. In this age the Church is His habitation by the Spirit, but the blessed

consummation in the eternal state will result in God dwelling with His redeemed creatures. What holy, glorious, never-ending intimacy that will be! It is the time when God is all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28). When that time has come all the former things are passed away. “And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain and suffering, these came into existence through sin. And all these things, the effects of sin, are now gone. What relief and what joy!

And next comes the eternal state of those who have rejected the gospel, who lived in their sins and died in their sins, unsaved, unregenerated. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” God still speaks. How many false teachers are meddling today with the solemn Scripture doctrine on the endless punishment of the wicked.

21:9-10. The vision of the city introduced

Verse 9. Angelic invitation

Verse 10. The view of the great city

21:11-21. A description of the city

Verses 11-14. Her identity

Verses 15-17. Her size

Verses 18-21. Her splendour

21:22-22:5. Life within the city

Verse 22. Her temple

Verses 22-24. Her light

Verses 24b and 26. Her honour

Verse 25. Her gates

Verse 27. Her citizenry

Revelation 21:9-27.

With the ninth verse we are brought back once more to the millennial state. What was briefly stated in Revelation 20:4-6 is now more fully revealed and we have a description of the bride, the Lamb's Wife, in her millennial glory, in relation to Israel and to the nations on the earth. one of the angels which had the seven vials appears on the scene to show something to the seer. We had a similar scene in Revelation 17:1-3. There one of these angelic bearers of the vials showed to John the harlot woman and her judgment; but now he is to see the bride, the Lamb's wife. "And he carried me away in the Spirit, and set me on a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." She is seen coming down out of heaven. This coming down precedes the one mentioned in Revelation 21:2-3 by a thousand years. Her coming down does not mean here that she actually comes down upon the earth, to dwell on the earth during the millennium. Her coming out of heaven in Revelation 21:2-3 is undoubtedly to the new earth. But here she comes down to be over the earth.

For a fuller exposition of the symbolical language we refer the reader to the larger exposition of Revelation by the author. We mention briefly that the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem are twelve previous stones.

The jasper again stands first; the wall itself is of jasper, while the first foundation stone mentioned is also jasper. It stands for the glory of God. Then the stones follow in their order. The sapphire (blue); the chalcedony (a combination of grey, blue and yellow); the emerald (green); the sardonyx (a pale blue); the sardius (blood red); chrysolite (purple and green); the beryl (bluish green); the topaz (pale green or golden); the chrysoprasus (mixed blue, green and yellow); the jacinth (combination of red, violet and yellow), and the amethyst (purple). And what must be the deeper meaning of all these precious stones! What varied aspects of the glory of God they must represent! And the redeemed in their heavenly city shall know, understand and enjoy it all. What wonderful, unspeakable glory is ahead of us! May we look forward to it every day and willingly serve and suffer the little while down here.

The city itself was seen by John as of pure gold. Gold typifies the righteousness of God in His nature and such the holy city is, composed of the saints who were made through grace the partakers of the divine nature. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each one of the several gates was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass." How suitable the pearl to form each gate, the entrance to the city divine. The Pearl is a type of the Church. She is the one pearl of great price for which the Lord gave all He had (Matthew 13:45-46). And the golden street like unto pure glass shows that all the ways and walks in that city are according to righteousness and that defilement is eternally impossible.

And there was no temple in that city; the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. There is no need any longer of a certain access into the presence of God, as it was on earth, but there is a free and unhindered fellowship with God and with His ever-blessed Son, the Lamb. Precious it is to hear Him again mentioned as the Lamb. His blessed work which He accomplished can never be forgotten by the saints in glory. And the light is not created light, but the light is the glory of God and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. The glory of God and Christ, the Lamb of God, will be the light and supersede all created light.

“And the nations shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour unto it (the better rendering); and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations unto it.” From this we learn that the glory light which shines eternally and undiminished in the holy city is the light in which the saved millennial nations on the earth walk. And the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour unto it; not “into” it as it is rendered in the Authorized Version. The heavens then rule, for Christ and His co-heirs are in that holy city, and the government and rule over the earth proceeds from there. The kings bring their glory and honour unto it, they bow in homage in the presence of the holy city.

Heaven is acknowledged as the source of all light, glory and blessing. When the nations and the kings of the earth go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of Hosts during the millennial age (Psalms 72:8-11; Is. 60:1-3; Zechariah 14:16) we doubt not, they will turn their faces upward. Mount Zion in Israel’s land will have resting upon it the glory and above it the vision of the city in which the glory dwells and from which the glory emanates. And unto it they bring honour and glory. The open gates, never closed, denote security and suggest also communication and intercourse with the earth. “There shall be no night there”; the night of sin and sorrow is forever gone for the dwellers in the holy city. “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Chapter 22

Chapter 22:1-5. Paradis restored

22:6-11. The testimony of the angel and of Christ

Revelation 22:1-5.

After the coming, Jerusalem and her blessings are once more revealed. In the opening verses of this chapter we find the glories of the redeemed.

Unspeakably beautiful and glorious are the concluding statements of this glory-section of the Revelation. Seven glories of the Redeemed are enumerated. 1. There will be no more curse. It means a perfect sinlessness; perfect holiness. 2. The throne of God and of the Lamb is there and the redeemed are forever linked with that throne. It is a perfect and blessed government which can never be disturbed by disorder. 3. His servant shall serve Him. Heaven will not consist in idleness. The holy city knows of service. And the service the saints will render to God in glory will be a perfect service. What will it be? We do not know what service it will be. God will have many surprises for His saints in glory. 4. There is also an eternal vision. "And they shall see His face." Oh! joy of all the joys in glory to see Him as He is and never lose sight of Him in all eternity. 5. His name shall be in their foreheads. It tells of eternal ownership and eternal possession. His name and the glory connected with it will be ours in eternal ages. 6. An eternal day. No more night; no need of any light. He is the light for all eternity. 7. An eternal reign. And they shall reign forever and ever. What glory and blessedness all this means. Such are the coming glories of the redeemed.

Chapter 22:6-21

The Final Messages

1. *The angel's message* (Revelation 22:6-11)
2. *The message of the Lord* (Revelation 22:12-13)
3. *The two classes* (Revelation 22:14-15)
4. *His final testimony* (Revelation 22:16)
5. *The answer of the Spirit and the bride* (Revelation 22:17)
6. *The final warning* (Revelation 22:18-19)
7. *The final word--the final prayer* (Revelation 22:20-21)

Verse 6. The angel authenticates the prophecy

Verse 7. Christ Himself announces His soon coming

Verses 8-11. The angel pronounces the book unsealed

Revelation 22:6-11.

Here it is an angel who speaks. "And the Lord God of the holy prophets (literal: of the spirits of the prophets) sent His angel to show unto His servants the things

which must shortly be done.” This reminds us of the beginning of the book, where we find a similar announcement. Suddenly some day these things will come to pass. The Lord will call His people to glory in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and then these things John had beheld will shortly come to pass. And then His own voice breaks in: “Behold I come quickly; Blessed is He that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” Three times we find this announcement in the last chapter (Revelation 22:7, Revelation 22:12 and Revelation 22:20). Here it is connected with the walk of the believer.

Just as in the beginning of the book a blessing is pronounced upon them that read the words of this prophecy (Revelation 1:3), so we have at the close of Revelation a similar beatitude. And keeping these blessed words means more than believing in them; their power is to shape our conduct and walk. What godly lives God’s people would live on earth, what unselfish and sacrificing lives, if they remembered constantly Him who thus testifies three times in the last chapter of the Bible, “Behold I come quickly.” Note the awful results in Christendom today for not having kept the sayings of the Prophecy of this book.

Then the Seer is told not to seal the sayings of this prophecy. Daniel was told to do the opposite (Daniel 12:4). Old Testament prophecy reveals prophetic events in the far distance. They could then not be fully comprehended. But after Christ came and the full revelation of things to come is given, no sealing is needed; the events are at hand, yet grace has delayed and delays still the fulfilment. And the heavenly messenger announces also the fixed state of the two classes into which all humanity is divided. The unjust and filthy, the unsaved, continue to exist in the nature which they possess, and the fact that the desires of that corrupt nature can no longer be gratified must constitute in itself an unspeakable torment. The righteous and holy, those saved by grace, partakers of the divine nature, will always be righteous and holy.

22:12-21. The concluding testimony of Christ

Verses 12-15. His coming and rewards

Revelation 22:12-13.

And now the Lord speaks again. For the second time He announces His coming. Here it is in connection with rewards. “My reward is with Me.” He Himself will receive His reward which is due Him as the sin-bearer. He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And with His coming, His own people will receive their rewards. What a stimulating power His soon coming is to service! And the coming One is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

Revelation 22:14-15.

Once more the two classes come into view. This is in fullest keeping with the end of the book and the end of the Bible. The Authorized Version here is faulty. Instead of “Blessed are they that do His commandments” the correct reading is “Blessed are they that wash their robes.” The former is an interpolation; the latter is the divine statement. (All leading scholars like Alford, Darby, etc., make the change. Even the Vulgate has it “Beati, qui lavant stolas suas in sanguinem Agni.”) Eternal life and eternal glory cannot be obtained by keeping commandments, by the works of the law. The blood of the Lamb alone is the title to glory. And then the other class. The one who rejects Christ, and thereby denies his lost condition and need of a Saviour, loveth and maketh a lie. He lives according to the old nature and the fruits of the flesh are there.

Verses 16-19. His person and relationships to mankind

Revelation 22:16.

How He speaks in this last Bible book! In the beginning of Revelation we find His self-witness in the church-message and once more we hear His voice, bearing testimony to Himself. How majestic: I, Jesus! He reveals Himself once more by the name of humiliation. What comfort it must have been to John! What comfort it is to us! Then He speaks of Himself as the Root and Offspring of David. He is David’s Lord and David’s Son (Psalms 110:1). He is the hope of Israel and in Him the promises made to David will all be realized. This will be the case when He comes to reign in power and great glory. But He also speaks of Himself as “the bright and morning-star.” His coming in power and glory is the sunrise for Israel and the Gentiles, the breaking of the millennial day. But for His Church He comes first as the morning star, as the Morning star in the eastern sky precedes the rising of the sun in all its glory. The Lord will come as the Morning star some time in the interval between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel and as the Sun of Righteousness after that week has come to an end.

Revelation 22:17.

As soon as He mentions Himself as the Morning star, there is an answer from the earth. The Spirit now down here, for He came down from heaven on Pentecost, and the Bride, the Church, say, “Come.” It is addressed to the Lord. They both long for His coming. And each individual believer who heareth is asked to join with this “Come.” Surely in these days of darkness and world-confusion, the Spirit saith, “Come!” And never before were there so many individual believers on earth who say “Come,” who wait for His coming. And the Come--from loving hearts--will increase and become a loud and pleading cry, till one blessed day He will answer and come to take His waiting people

home. Here also is the final gospel message of the Bible. He that will, let him take the water of life freely. Once more a loving God makes it clear that the water of life is free to all who want it. It is the last “Whosoever” in the Bible.

Revelation 22:18-19.

And what a solemn warning is given! In a larger sense the warning applies to the entire Word of God. Higher criticism, which takes away, and false teachers, who add unto it, find written here their deserved judgment. But the Revelation is specially in view. Whosoever meddles with His Revelation must fall under the severest divine displeasure. Beware! oh ye critics! Beware! ye who call this book uninspired and warn against the study of it!

Verse 20a. Christ declares His soon coming

Verse 20b. The church replies to her Lord

Verse 21. The closing benediction

Revelation 22:20-21.

We reach the final statements of this great book. For the third time He announces His coming. “He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly.” It is the last time our Lord speaks from heaven. The next time His voice will be heard will be on that day when He descends out of heaven with a shout. While the two former announcements of His coming found in this chapter are preceded by the word, “Behold,” this last one affirms the absolute certainty of the event. And there is the answer, the blessed response. “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” It is the Church which answers His positive and certain announcement. It is the last word recorded in the Bible coming from the lips of man.

The first word we hear man address to the Lord in the Bible is the solemn word “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid” ([Genesis 3:10](#)). The last word addressed to the Lord by redeemed man is “even so, come, Lord Jesus.” And between these two utterances in Genesis and Revelation is the story of redemption. Well might this final prayer of the Bible be termed the forgotten prayer. But it is equally true, with the revival of the study of prophecy, more hearts and lips are praying today for His coming, than ever before. And the prayer will be answered. May the reader and the writer pray for His coming daily and may our lives too bear witness to the fact that we expect Him to answer the petition of His people. The final benediction assures us once more of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The better rendering is “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints.”



Your self-examination or written work.

1. In Revelation 1: 9-20, what according to verse 9 is the twofold experience in which all believers share, and what should characterise their lives. Compare Revelation 1: 6a; John 16: 33; 2 Timothy 2: 12.
2. Write down in your own words the place to be given to the overcomers in the eternal glories. See Revelation 3: 1-13 and 12: 2-5.
3. Illustrate with references to the Book of Revelation differences of interpretation relating to prophecy.
4. What can be learned from chapters 1 and 12, of the person of Christ? Trace these characteristics throughout the book.
5. From chapters 2 and 3 deduce the purpose of the writer as it concerned the churches originally addressed, and note the working out of this purpose in what follows.
6. Compare chapters 4 and 5, with Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1 and Romans 8, noting recurrent symbolism. What is taught here concerning the relationship between the creation and the Creator?
7. Study the promises, assurances and conditions of victory.
8. Observe the prophecies in Daniel 2, 7, and 9, and in Matthew 24. What light does the Book of Revelation throw on those parts of these prophecies which have been already fulfilled, and on those which are still future?
9. How is the contrast between this city and the harlot city Babylon brought to the mind of the reader in Revelation 21: 9-21? (a) Compare verse 9 with Revelation 17. (b) Work out this contrast in some of its features. What are the outstanding differences between Babylon and the New Jerusalem? Zechariah 14: 20-21; Luke 16: 15; 1 John 2: 16-17.
10. How are the truth and the importance of the contents of this book confirmed to us in Revelation 22: 6 – 21? What is its origin, and from where does it derive its authority?

11. Study the features of this Scripture Book that specially qualify it to be the closing Book of the Bible.

The End of Time Generation Today

Introduction

Jesus had much to say when asked by His disciples about His second coming and the end of days. Jesus made it clear that no man knows the hour of His return. Only the Father knows the hour. As the son of man, Jesus was not given that knowledge to pass on to His disciples. However, as the Christ, He knows the hour because He and the Father are one in the same. They are one God with two personalities.

Jesus provided signs to look for regarding the end of days. The most evident today are false prophets, natural disasters in various places, and rampant wickedness. Our current world can be compared to the days of Noah. In those days, the intent of the thoughts of mankind was continuously evil (Genesis 6:5). There was total disregard for God and His ways. People were carrying on with their daily activities. Suddenly, the floods came and swept them away to destruction. Today, unrighteousness overwhelms us on all sides. Hollywood films and television make murder and adultery a sport to which we give high ratings. Legalization of homosexual marriage is gaining wider acceptance. Drug addiction and pornography are commonplace. Most sadly, children are being abused in horrifying numbers. Abortion on demand is murder that has been twisted into a freedom, a right of choice. Businesses need a horde of lawyers to execute an agreement when handshakes sufficed in the past. Corporations cook the books rather than inspecting and reconciling them. Executives unashamedly reward themselves outrageous bonuses after leading their companies into ruin. Sunday has become sports day instead of church day. The list goes on.

Second Timothy chapter 3 summarizes what society will be like in the last days. Today, you will find all of these traits in homes, schools, businesses and churches: lovers of self; lovers of money; boastful; proud; blasphemers; disobedient to parents; ungrateful; unholy; unloving; irreconcilable; slanderers; without self-control; brutal; haters of good; traitors; reckless; conceited; lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; having a form of religion but denying its power. These ungodly behaviours have been around before but not as widespread as they are today. It will continue to get worse until Christ returns the second time to judge the nations for their sin of rejecting His Word, which cleanses us from sin.

The State Israel

The promise as proclaimed by the prophets has been delivered in part. In Ezekiel chapter 37, God gave Ezekiel a vision of dry bones and two sticks. Ezekiel was shown that God's people, the Jews, who represent the dry bones, would be brought back to their home in Palestine, and the two nations of Israel and Judah (the two sticks) would be reunited in a new messianic kingdom to come.

There are three stages regarding the dry bones: the scattering, the coming together, and the bringing back to life. The dry bones represent the whole house of Israel. In the first stage, the scattering of the Jews, the dry bones, began with the fall of Judah and the great deportation of the Jews to Babylonia in 605 BC. Although a remnant of Israel returned to Judah after the Babylonian captivity, the house of Israel was not a sovereign nation and was again scattered after 70 AD until Israel's rebirth as a nation in 1948. This represents the second stage, the coming together. However, Israel today is like dead bones without life. This may sound harsh, but this is what God says about Israel. Today, Israel as a whole continues to reject Jesus Christ as the Messiah and, therefore, is dead to God. The third stage, the bringing back to life, has yet to occur. This is spiritual life that will be given to the whole house of Israel when Christ returns and Israel repents of its sin of rejection. During the Millennium age, Christ will be their shepherd and David will be their King. Israel will be the greatest nation on earth. The peoples of the Gentile nations will come to Jerusalem to worship the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. The greatest period of peace and prosperity will exist on earth in righteousness. Following the Millennium age, Christ will usher all who are His into the kingdom of God for eternity.

One of the greatest sins of the Gentiles since Christ's first coming has been to blame the Jews for His crucifixion. This is blatant, self-righteous pride. The whole world has crucified Christ. When Christ returns to earth, He will judge all nations for rejecting the gospel. Conversely, all who have accepted Christ will have eternal life with Him. He will set up a theocratic government on earth. Those who reject this form of government led by Christ need not worry. They will not be included.

The Seventh Kingdom of the Antichrist

In the book of Revelation, chapter 17, Christ reveals to the Apostle John the rise of a kingdom, which will be led by the Antichrist to make war against the Lamb (Christ) who is the Lord of lords, the King of kings. Both the kingdom and the Antichrist are described as beasts. The use of the words 'kingdoms' and 'kings' by the Old Testament prophets and the Apostle John was a reflection of the political systems of their times. The political systems of today are represented by nations with presidents and prime ministers.

An angel described the Antichrist as a seventh king who will rule over ten kings in a seventh kingdom. Seven kings are described by the angel as 'five who have fallen' (past tense), 'one who is' (present tense) and 'one who is yet to come' (future tense). Kings and kingdoms are in reference to the time and place of John's ministry. This identifies 'the one who is' as Domitian, Emperor of the Roman Empire. Bible scholars such as Newell and Govett identify the 'five who have fallen' as rulers of the Roman Empire prior to Domitian including Julius Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. Although other rulers preceded Domitian, the five listed had something in common with Domitian – they were perverse, and they 'fell' as their rule ended prematurely by assassination or suicide. The Antichrist is the 'one who is yet to come'. He will be the seventh ruler who will rule the 'revised' Roman Empire, the seventh kingdom. Like the previous six kings before him, his rule will end prematurely when Christ returns to defeat him.

Daniel prophesied the rise of two European powers: the 'ancient' Roman Empire and the 'revised' Roman Empire. He described the 'ancient' Roman Empire as 'the legs of iron with feet of iron and clay', and the 'revised' Roman Empire as 'the fourth beast' - a terrifying, powerful and vicious kingdom. In one of his apocalyptic visions, Daniel saw a little horn [the Antichrist] rise up among ten horns and subdue three of them. In Revelation, John saw the little horn as a beast rising to power in the seventh kingdom [the 'revised' Roman Empire of a unified Europe]. The little horn is described as the eighth king [leader] of this seventh kingdom. The remaining seven horns [leaders] in this kingdom will give him authority. Daniel was so terrified by what he saw that he turned pale and kept the matter to himself.

The Four Kings

Daniel had two apocalyptic visions. The second of these visions is described in the last three chapters in the Book of Daniel. These chapters reveal the end-time events. They are relevant to us because the four kings represent four world power alliances that exist today. They will converge on Israel and culminate the greatest military battles the world has ever experienced. It is during this time that Christ will return to earth the second time to conclude the battles at Armageddon and rescue Israel. Otherwise, Israel and the Gentile nations would not survive World War III. Christ will then establish His kingdom on earth during the Millennium age when there will be righteousness, peace, and prosperity.

The four kings of end-time prophecy describe the kings of the west, east, south and north. They are not literal kings with monarchial rule over kingdoms. The angel described to Daniel the world powers of the end-time as kingdoms because the present day political systems of rule did not exist during Daniel's time. The end-time world powers will be represented by four global leaders, and

these leaders will form alliances. The identity and actions of these world powers are described primarily in Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation. The king of the west is the Antichrist who will lead the 'revised' Roman Empire [the seventh kingdom] and its western allies. The 'revised' Roman Empire today is the European Union in transition. The king of the south is Egypt and its southern Islamic allies. The king of the north is Russia (described as Gog in Ezekiel) who will lead the nations of the Black Sea region and Caucasus Central Asia (ancient Scythia), and Iran (ancient Parthia). The king of the east is China and its Asiatic allies.

The adverse treatment by the world toward Israel is a key barometer of the time of the end as described by Daniel. No one knows the hour of Christ's return. But as the danger intensifies for Israel, the time of Christ's return draws nearer. He will first appear in the air to rapture His church, the true body of believers. Afterwards, the Antichrist will rise to power and offer a [false] peace treaty to Israel. This will begin the seventieth week of Daniel, the terrible seven-year tribulation period, which culminates with the return of Christ to earth at the final battle of Armageddon.

The Apostasy

The word apostasy comes from the Greek word meaning to revolt or depart. The apostle Paul clearly stated to the church of Thessalonica that the second coming of Christ to earth would not occur until there is first a falling away [revolt or departure] from the faith and the Antichrist is revealed. Revolt is not to be confused with rebellion, or backsliding. Backsliders do not reject the truth, rather, they rebel and disobey God, thus removing their selves from fellowship with Him. Revolt, however, is departure from the truth, which is progressing today at an alarming rate. Organized religion and a belief in God continue to be an integral part of society, but genuine faith and trust in one God, the Almighty, is on the decline. This represents the growing apostasy that will be manifested in the harlot church.

Apostasy creates a vacuum because mankind has always felt a need to believe in a higher power. Consequently, the vacuum is filled with deception, which takes the place of truth. Cults, heresies and false doctrines are the deceptions seducing the world today. The Bible, which is the Word of God, is the Truth. And this Truth is found only in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Truth is being rejected in the name of religious tolerance. The World Council of Churches has evolved into a religious monolith of polytheism that is prostituting the church into the great harlot as described in the Book of Revelation.

When the falling away progresses to a point of God's choosing, the church body of true believers will be raptured. The seventieth week of Daniel, known as the seven years of tribulation, will begin when the Antichrist makes a [false] peace

treaty with Israel. The Holy Spirit's work in the world relative to the church will have ended. However, He will take on a different role during the tribulation. He will step aside and allow Satan to take authority over the world. Paul told the Thessalonians that God would allow the world to believe a lie because the world would fully reject the truth. The Holy Spirit will be in the world to direct certain events for the sake of God's elect and for those martyred during the tribulation. The tribulation will conclude at the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

The Harlot Church

Much is spoken about the harlot church in the Book of Revelation. It is known as the apostate church because it will represent the ultimate rejection of the gospel by the world, which is the falling away as described by the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians. It is important to understand that the true church reflects the teachings and doctrine of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It is called the Christian church. Jews who follow these teachings and doctrine are known as Messianic Jews. Without the foundation laid by Christ, a religion is nothing more than a cult, an antichrist religion. Before the Millennium age is ushered in by Christ, all cult religions will be destroyed along with the harlot church for their rejection of the gospel.

A harlot is a prostitute. She is not faithful to one man and has many adulterous relationships. The same will be true of the church before the second coming of Christ. After the rapture of the true believers, the harlot church will be in its fullness of apostasy. The apostle John's vision in Revelation regarding the seven churches represented the various conditions of the church during his time. The visions also represent the stages the church would go through during the age of grace, from Christ's crucifixion to the rapture of the church. The Philadelphian church represents the true believers. The Laodicean church represents the harlot church, which exists today. It is an empty form of manmade tradition of organized, ritualistic Christianity. In John's last vision of the churches, the Laodicean church was rebuked by Christ for being a lukewarm church. It is neither faithful to nor in denial of Christ. Consequently, it has no faith or trust in Him. It goes through the formality while denying the power of God.

Organized religion with a belief in God continues to play a large role in today's society, but even the demons believe in God. Apostasy allows error, heresies and false doctrines to compromise the Truth. Today, fewer Christians believe the Word of God to be infallible, thereby rejecting the truth. The virgin birth, the resurrection, and other fundamental beliefs are being challenged by some mainstream denominational churches. The harlot church is rising to power and racing toward judgment.

The Spirit of the Antichrist

The apostle John is the only writer in the Bible to use the word Antichrist in reference to a person. The person of the Antichrist is described in various ways by the Old Testament prophets. Regardless of semantics used to describe the Antichrist, Jesus referred to the same person as the ‘abomination of desolation’ spoken of by the prophet Daniel. He is the one who will set himself up as God in Jerusalem. He will hate anyone and everything associated with the one true God represented in the name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. His hatred will cause desolation among those who resist him. For this reason, Jesus warned those who are in Judea during this time to flee to the mountains. Jesus further warned that there would be great tribulation such as the world has never experienced. And unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the elect’s sake, Christ will return to earth the second time to destroy the Antichrist and set up His kingdom on earth for 1,000 years, which will be the Millennium age. After this period, God will establish His eternal kingdom on a new earth and in a new heavenly Jerusalem.

Before the person of the Antichrist can come to power, there must be the spirit of the Antichrist prevalent in the world. Jesus and the apostles Paul and John specifically warned of this. False christs and false prophets will appear in great numbers. Cults, heresies and false doctrines will seduce the world. The apostle Paul warned that there would be a falling away from the Truth. So by definition, the spirit of the Antichrist will be ‘against’ or ‘in place’ of the true Christ. It will manifest itself in many forms. It might sound appealing and helpful, or, it might be as threatening as the Islamic Jihad (Al Qaeda, Islamic State, ISIS, etc.). But the common thread among them will be the denial of Christ. The apostle John clearly states that any spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God; this is the spirit of the Antichrist.

A false form of the Christian church will be prevalent in the world after Christ returns in the air to rapture His true church. Only those Christians who embrace the Truth with faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ through repentance will be raptured. Opposition against true believers is on the increase. This trend is also increasing in some mainstream churches; it reflects the ascent of the harlot church.

One World Today

A one-world system is taking shape today. The United Nations and its International Court of Justice are attempting to usurp the sovereign political and judicial authority of nations. They are working to make nations’ constitutional laws subservient to international law. The foreign currency exchange system is unsustainable due to large foreign trade imbalances that threaten the world economies. The Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a monetary unit of international reserve assets. Some prominent

nations are working to unseat the US dollar as the world's de-facto currency and replace it with a form of international currency. The World Council of Churches, in the name of religious tolerance, has evolved into a religious monolith of polytheism that is prostituting the church into the great harlot as described in the Book of Revelation.

In the Book of Revelation, the apostle John describes the vision he had of the Antichrist and his authority over the world. The Antichrist will have authority over the religious, political and economic policies of the world. The Antichrist will be manifested in two persons described as beasts in Revelation. The first beast will be given power over every tribe, people, language and nation. The one-world political system will facilitate this authority of the Antichrist. The second beast will exercise all the authority of the first beast. He will be given power to compel all people on the earth to worship the first beast. This will occur after the Antichrist has destroyed his rival, the harlot church. The second beast will be permitted to give a spirit to the image of the first beast. This idol will have the power to slay those who do not worship the image of the first beast. The second beast will have supernatural demonic power to deceive all on earth except God's elect. He will require all, great and small, to receive a mark on their forehead or right hand so that no one can buy or sell without this mark. A one-world economic system will facilitate this authority of the Antichrist. The apostle Paul told Timothy that because people would reject the Truth [Jesus Christ] that could save them, God would send them a great delusion. Therefore, they will be condemned because they choose unrighteousness over the Truth. The one-world system will be the platform from which the Antichrist delivers the great deception.

The Constitutional Church

The Constitutional Church is not what you may think as named by the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, or any other Apostolic Church, but it refers to the whole company of regenerate persons through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in all times and ages, in heaven and on earth. The Constitutional Church, in this large sense, is nothing less than the body of Christ, the organism to which Christ gives spiritual life, and through which He manifests the fullness of power and grace.

“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. (Ephesians 1: 22-23)” (KJV)

This Church existed in germ before the day of Pentecost, otherwise there would have been nothing to which those converted on that day could have been ‘added’.

“Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2: 47).” (KJV)

Among the apostles, regenerate as they were, united in Christ by faith and in that faith baptised.

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. (Acts 19: 4)” (KJV)

Prior to Pentecost, the Constitutional Church existed without officers under the head and cornerstone Jesus Christ Himself. The officers came later as exigencies arose.

Any number of believers may constitute themselves into a Christian Church as part of the Constitutional Church, by adopting for their rule of faith and practice Christ’s law as laid down in the New Testament, and by associating themselves together, in accordance with it, for his worship and service.

In ascertaining the will of Christ, and in applying his commands to providential exigencies, the Holy Spirit enlightens one member through the counsel of another, and as the result of combined deliberation guides the whole body to right conclusions. The work of the Holy Spirit is the very foundation of the Scripture injunctions to unity. While Jesus Christ is sole king, the government of the church, so far as regards the interpretation and execution of his will by the body, is an absolute democracy, in which the whole body of members is entrusted with the duty and responsibility of carrying out the laws of Christ as expressed in His most Holy Word.

The law of the Constitutional Church of Christ is simply the will of Christ, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures and interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

This laws respect:

- (a) Qualifications for membership. These are regeneration and baptism (the spiritual new birth and ritual new birth). The surrender of the inward and outward life to Jesus Christ; the spiritual entrance into communion with Christ’s death and resurrection, and the formal profession of this to the world by being buried with Christ and rising with him in baptism.
- (b) The duties imposed on members. The discovery of the will of Jesus Christ through the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testament. However, each member has the right of private judgment, being directly responsible

to Christ for his use of the means of knowledge, and for his obedience to Christ's commands when these are known.

Proof that the government of the church is democratic or congregational.

- (a) The duty of the whole church to preserve unity in its action.
- (b) The responsibility of the whole church for maintaining pure doctrine and practice.
- (c) From the committing of the ordinances to the charge of the whole church to observe and guard. As the church expresses truth in her teaching, so she is to express it in symbol through the ordinances.
- (d) From the election by the whole church, of its own officers and delegates.
- (e) From the power of the whole church to exercise discipline.

Erroneous views as to church government.

The world-church theory, or the Vatican (Romanist) view. This holds that all local churches are subject to the supreme authority of the bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter and the infallible vicegerent of Christ, and so united constitute the one and only church of Christ on earth, where outside the Roman Church there is no salvation.

We believe.

Jesus Christ gave no such authority to Peter. Matthew 16: 18-19 simply refers to the personal position of Peter as first confessor of Christ and preacher of his name to Jews and Gentiles alike. Other apostles also constituted the very foundation of Christianity. If Peter had such authority given him, there is no evidence that he had power to transmit it to others.

In short:

- (a) There is even no conclusive evidence that Peter ever was at Rome much less that he was bishop of Rome.
- (b) There is no evidence that he really did so appoint the bishops of Rome as his successors.
- (c) If Peter did so appoint the bishops of Rome, the evidence of continuous successions since that time is lacking.
- (d) There is abundant evidence that a hierarchical form of church government is corrupting to the Constitutional Church of Christ, and dishonouring the glorified Christ.

(e) It is contradicted by the intercourse which the New Testament Churches held with each other as independent bodies, as for example the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1-35)

For more instruction read the ‘Constitutional Church of Christ,’ e-book and study course on Internet, by the author.



The Bible – Word of God

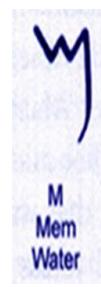
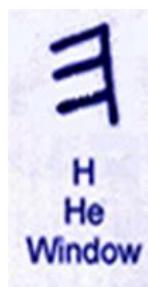
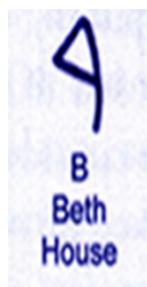
**By Rev. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D., Pastor, Independent
Member of Evangelical Convention.**

The earliest Hebrew Scriptures

The Old Testament Scriptures were penned over a period extending more than a millennium, from c. 1450 to c. 400 E.C. according to conservative scholars, Moses was the first inspired writer, producing the Pentateuch around 1450-1400 B.C. (see 'Authorship of the Pentateuch'). Malachi, the last of the OT writers, wrote not later than 400 B.C. For a discussion of more technical matters relating to authorship, date, etc., of the various OT books, see Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (1964), and R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1969).

The text of the Old Testament

The earliest parts of the OT were originally inscribed on leather or papyrus in old Hebrew with the archaic prong-shaped letters similar to the script of the earliest recovered Phoenician inscriptions, e.g.



This archaic writing gradually developed, after 400 B.C. into the square script found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, later Hebrew MSS., and in printed Hebrew Bibles since 1477, e.g.:



B



H



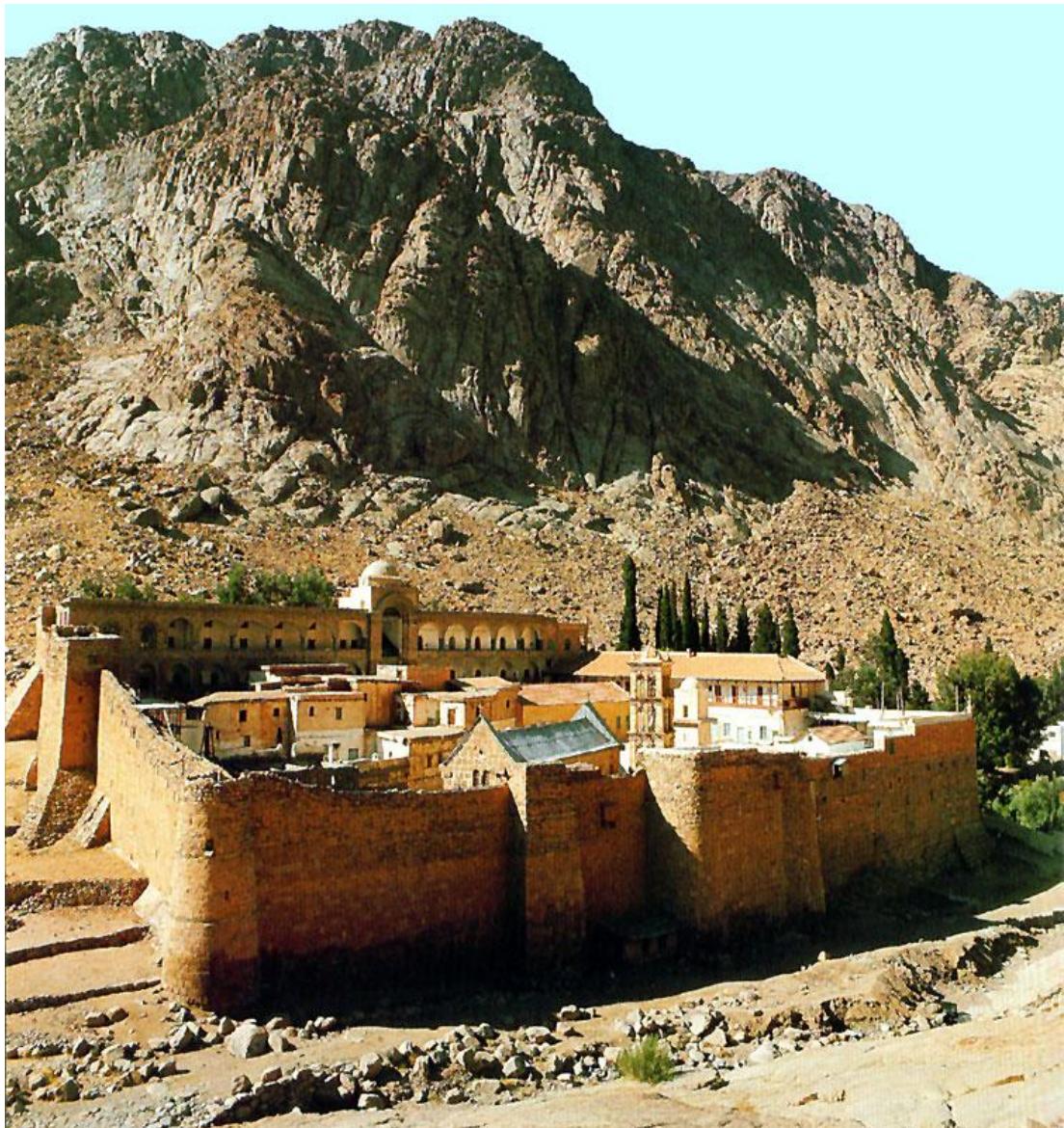
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Canonization of the Old Testament

The canon of Scripture is a phrase by which the catalog of the authoritative sacred writings is designated. The word *kanon* in the Greek originally signified a

reed or measuring rod. Actually it indicated 'that which measures,' that is, a standard or norm or rule; specifically, 'that which is measured' by that standard or norm. Those books which were measured by the standard or test of divine inspiration and authority, and were adjudged to be 'God-breathed,' were included in 'the canon.'





St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, where the Codex Sinaiticus was discovered by Tischendorf in 1844.

Conservatives hold that inspired Scripture had the impress of canonical authority from the moment of inspiration by the Spirit of God, independent of formal collection or mere human recognition. The higher critical view, however, is that canonization took extensive time. According to this theory, the Law was first canonized by 444 B.C., the Prophets not until 300-200 B.C., and the Writings about 165-100 B.C. (see 'Order of Books in the Hebrew Old Testament').

Higher criticism thus assumes that the threefold division of the Hebrew canon is due principally to chronology. It is held that the Prophets did not become popular until after 300 B.C., and as a result their writings were collected and canonized within the next century. Alleged 'Second' and 'Third' Isaiah (ch. 40-66 mainly) were attached to Isaiah because their authors were completely forgotten. Daniel was supposedly not written until 167 B.C. and assumed to be too late to

be included in the second or prophetic section. Other books, such as Esther, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, are said to have been composed too late to be included in the historical section.

Conservative criticism, however, maintains that the threefold division of the Hebrew canon can be explained by either the status of the writer, or the arrangement of the books for liturgical convenience. Early dates for the Old Testament books which maintain their integrity are accordingly held. Strict adherence to the Jewish canon has always been the Protestant position.



Jews praying and reading Scriptures beside the Wailing Wall, Jerusalem

The work of the Masoretes

Before A.D. 500 Hebrew manuscripts had no system of vowel indication, except certain consonants to indicate long vowels. Between A.D. 600 and 950 Jewish scholars, called Masoretes (Traditionalists), invented a full system of vowels and accents to punctuate the text. They also standardized the text, including marginal readings (called *qeré*) and textual variations (called *ketib*). The work of the Masoretes on the Hebrew Bible providentially prepared it for the advent of the printing press five centuries later.

Printed Hebrew Bibles

The Psalter was the first part of the Hebrew Bible put into print. It appeared in 1477. In 1488 the first edition of the entire Hebrew Old Testament (Tanakh) appeared printed with vowels and accents.

The earliest Christian scriptures

For almost two decades after our Lord's ascension, the OT Scriptures, mainly in Greek constituted the only Bible in existence. The first NT book was apparently James written perhaps as early as A.D. 45. The Apocalypse is commonly viewed as the latest, dating about A.D. 95. During this early period the church employed the OT as its Bible. Peter preached from the OT (Acts 2:14-36), as did Stephen (Acts 7:2-53), Philip (Acts 8:32-35) and Paul. All the NT writers were imbued with the OT and their inspired writings were grounded in its inspired revelation.

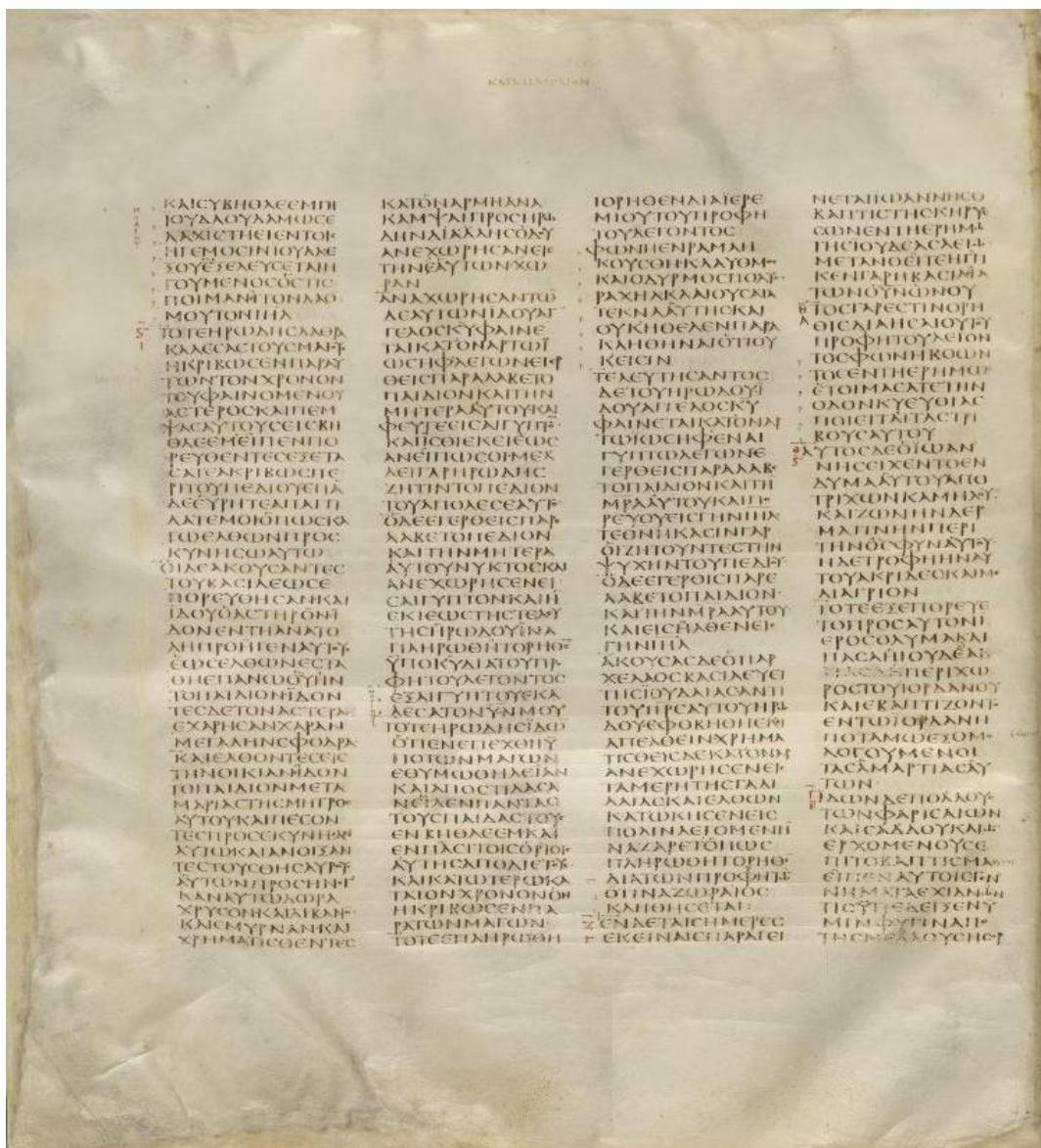
Origin of the New Testament books The gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3-4) was first preached by word of mouth and interpreted in the light of OT history and prophecy. Oral accounts of the life and work of Christ were written down and finally gave way to the inspired synoptic gospels sometime before A.D. 70. The need for doctrinal interpretation of Christ's person and work soon became a necessity, accentuated by the need to define Christianity against such errors as legalism and antinomianism. The Pauline and other epistles were written to meet this need. The demand for a historical sketch of the development of the church was met by the book of Acts. The Apocalypse was penned to consummate the revelation of God's plan and purposes for time and eternity.

Canonization of the New Testament Some early noncanonical New Testament books

1 Clement, an epistle penned by Clement of Rome (c. A.D.96) to the Corinthian church, was highly esteemed. It was considered of canonical authority by some and was publicly read in the church at Corinth around 170. Various writers in Egypt used it, such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen. It was attached to Codex Alexandrinus.

2 Clement was an epistle also attached to Codex Alexandrinus. It was falsely ascribed to Clement of Rome and never was widely read. Neither it nor 1 Clement ever enjoyed canonical recognition in the West.

The Didache (The teaching of the twelve Apostles) (c. 120) was regarded as Holy Scripture by some in Egypt, notably Clement of Alexandria and Origen. It had a wide circulation.



A folio of the Codex Sinaiticus, one of the early important manuscripts of the Bible, written in Greek. (Matthew 2,5-3,7)

The Epistle of Barnabas (c. 130) was included in the Codex of Sinaiticus and was accounted authoritative in Egypt. Jerome (c. 400) regarded it as apocryphal, and it gradually lost any claim to the status of Holy Scripture.

The Shepherd of Hermas (c. 140) was written by Hermas, the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome. It was also included in Codex Sinaiticus and was looked upon highly by the Muratorian Canon, but never established itself as Holy Scripture.

Apocalypse of Peter (c. 145), of less importance than the preceding books, was nevertheless highly regarded in the East and known in the West. It was not approved by the Muratorian Canon and regarded as spurious by Eusebius.

Acts of Paul (c. 170) was circulated widely and viewed by some as canonical, but enlightened scholarship saw its apocryphal nature and gradually it was rejected. Numerous other later gospels, acts, epistles and apocalypses appeared under apostolic names. These were obviously forgeries and never received serious consideration of the church.

Factors fostering New Testament canonicity The recognition of 1 Clement, the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas as canonical or semi-canonical, especially in the East, by the end of the 3rd cen. focused attention on the need of a clearly defined canon. Also, the incomplete canon of the heretic Marcion (c. 140) was widely subscribed to. Marcion was a Gnostic and on doctrinal grounds accepted only Luke's gospel and ten of the Pauline epistles, after seriously mutilating them. The appearance in time of other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books clamoring for recognition demanded a clearly delimited canon. Somewhat later the edict of Emperor Diocletian (303), ordering the burning of all sacred books, necessitated carefully defining the canon.

Criteria for New Testament canonicity The first criterion was *apostolicity*. Was the writer a bona fide apostle? If not, did he have close associations with an apostle, as was true of the writers of the gospel of Mark, the gospel of Luke, the book of Acts and the epistle to the Hebrews?

The second criterion was *content*. Were the subject matter and the treatment of it of the high order and spiritual stamp demanded by the test of Holy Scripture? By this criterion the spurious books were eliminated.

The third criterion was *universality*. Did the church as a whole receive the book? Did it have a universal appeal?

The fourth criterion was *divine inspiration*. Did the book give unmistakable evidence of being 'God-breathed' (2 Tim 3:16)? And did the Holy Spirit give this conviction to men of God that this was true? This was the final test. Without providential guidance the NT canon would never have been correctly delimited.

Books early received as canonical

These recognized books were called by Origen (c.245) *homologoumena* ('confessed' or 'acknowledged' books). They were the NT writings universally owned as inspired Holy Scripture. Origen included the four gospels, Paul's epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, Acts and the Apocalypse. Although he did not include Hebrews among the *homologoumena*, he cited the epistle as Pauline, and

canonical. In fact, the only books he did not cite as Scripture were Jude and 2 and 3 John.

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 300-325), the church historian, included among the *homologoumena* the four gospels, Acts, the Pauline epistles, 1 John, 1 Peter and the Revelation. He seems to have inadvertently omitted Hebrews.

New Testament books at first questioned

Origen called these questioned books the *antilegomena* ('spoken against' or 'disputed'). Among these he placed Hebrews (see above) 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude, and the apocryphal epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Didache, and the gospel of the Hebrews.

Eusebius of Caesarea divided the *antilegomena* into (1) those merely disputed or questioned — James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John; (2) those actually spurious or uninspired — Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, the epistle of Barnabas, and the Didache.

Reasons for doubting certain New Testament books

The seven books that at first were challenged are James, 2 Peter, Hebrews, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and the Revelation. The hesitancy of some early church leaders to accept these books is explainable on the basis of their peculiar internal evidence. (1) James and Jude style themselves mere 'servants' of Christ, not apostles, while the author of 2 and 3 John refers to himself as a 'presbyter' or 'elder,' not an apostle. John in the Apocalypse calls himself 'servant' and 'brother.' (2) Hebrews is anonymous and differs in vocabulary and style from the recognized Pauline epistles. Peters second epistle, while not anonymous, differs from 1 Peter in the same way. (3) James, too, was written to early Jewish converts and not addressed to the great universal Gentile church. (4) Jude was questioned also because it used the apocryphal book of Enoch (1:9; 5:4; cf. Jude 14-15). Gradually, however, all these controversial though genuine books came to be universally accepted by the church. In the West this was accomplished by A.D. 400 and in the East by 500.

Early growth of the canon in the West The witness of Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 96).

In his highly revered letter (known as 1 Clement) to the church at Corinth while bishop of Rome, he shows knowledge of Matthew, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and refers over and over again to Hebrews.

The witness of Marcion (c. 140).

As a Gnostic heretic he accepted only Luke's gospel and ten of Paul's epistles. But his testimony, though erroneous, is illuminating and constitutes an important milestone in the church's collection and approval of the present NT canon.

The witness of Hermas (c. 150).

As the reputed author of the highly revered Shepherd of Hermas he authenticates Matthew's gospel, Ephesians, apparently Hebrews and James, and notably the Apocalypse.

The witness to Irenaeus (c. 140-203).

As one who in his youth came in contact with Polycarp at Smyrna and as later bishop of Lyons in Gaul, he bears witness to the four gospels, Acts, 1 Peter, 1 John, all Paul's letters except Philemon, and the Revelation.

The witness of the Muratorian Canon (c. 172).

The fragment was discovered by Muratori, an Italian, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan in 1740. The mutilated beginning contained apparently Matthew and Mark. It attests all the NT books except 1 Peter, 2 Peter, James and Hebrews.

The witness of the Old Latin version before 170.

It attests all the books except James and 2 Peter, Hebrews being added before Tertullian's time.

The witness of Tertullian (c. 150-222).

This voluminous Latin writer of Carthage attests the four gospels, 13 Pauline epistles, Acts, 1 Peter, 1 John, Jude and the Apocalypse. Following the principle of apostolic authorship, he rejected Hebrews since he believed that Barnabas was the author.

The witness of Cyprian (c. 200-258).

As bishop of Carthage he closely followed Tertullian regarding Hebrews, and did not quote from Philemon, James, 2 or 3 John, or Jude.

Later growth of the canon in the West The witness of Jerome (c. 340-420).

The great translator of the Latin Vulgate and renowned scholar attested all our canonical NT books. He accepted Hebrews as written by Paul, and explained how James and 2 Peter came to be recognized. His opinion is of superlative value.

The witness of Augustine (354-430).

His opinion, unlike Jerome's, was uncertain. Although he accepted all the seven books which had been questioned, he posited different degrees of scriptural authority and was largely responsible for the wider OT canon of the Roman Catholic church, including the Apocrypha.

Action of church councils.

The delimitation of the NT canon was not the work of any council or councils. The inspired worth and intrinsic authority of each individual book were the deciding factors. This fact is strong proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the books that have come down to us in the canon. Not until the close of the 4th century did any council make any pronouncement on the subject.

The third Council of Carthage (397)

It rendered the first decision on the canon. One of the canons of this body stipulated that only 'canonical' books be read in the churches. Then it listed exactly our present-day 27 books. Hebrews was recognized on the ground of being Pauline. The Council of Hippo (419) repeated the list of the Third Council of Carthage. The selection of the canon was thus a spontaneous process that went on in the church till each book proved its own worth.



A page from the Wyclif Bible

Growth of the canon in the East

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (c. 116); Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (c. 69-155), and Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (c. 80-c. 155), testified to Matthew, John, Paul's epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John and likely Acts.

The Didache (c. 120) features Matthew and knows of Luke, as well as the majority of our NT books.

Melito, bishop of Sardis (c. 170), quoted from all the NT books except James, Jude, 2 and 3 John.



The gymnasium at Sardis has been restored to its ancient splendour. Melito, bishop of Sardis, quoted from most of the New Testament books.

Theophilus of Antioch (c. 115-c. 188) adhered to most of the NT books and held them in the same esteem as the OT canon. However, his successor Lucian (martyred 312) in his 'Antioch Canon' excluded Revelation, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John and Jude in his revised OT and NT text.

Basil the Great of Cappadocia (c. 329-379) and Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330-390) recognized all the books of our present canon, except the Revelation, although he quoted it as written by John.

John Chrysostom (347-407) accepted all but 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John and Revelation.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428) rejected the Catholic epistles and the Revelation. The opinion of this part of the church was thus strongly influenced by the canon of Constantinople, which rejected 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation, and which developed from the 'Antioch Canon' of Lucian.

The Peshitta (411-435) likewise followed the canon of Constantinople. Not until Philoxenus (c. 508) had the Syriac Peshitta been revised to add the rejected books was the unsound influence of the canon of Constantinople broken.

Early growth of the canon in Egypt and Palestine

Justin Martyr (c.100-165) gave important testimony concerning the Revelation, which he considered the work of the apostle John. He also knew Hebrews and probably referred to Mark's gospel under the title 'Memoirs of Peter.'

Clement of Alexandria (c. 155-c. 215) was very well read and accepted all the books in our NT, including Jude, Hebrews, the Catholic epistles and the Revelation.

Origen of Alexandria (c. 185-c. 253) shows evidence of having accepted the books commonly disputed (Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, James, Jude). He held the Apocalypse to be among the accepted books (*homologoumena*).

Later growth of the canon in Egypt and Palestine

The Chester Beatty Papyri from the 3rd century, edited in 1933-37 by Sir Frederic Kenyon, authenticate the Four gospels, the Acts, the Pauline epistles and Hebrews (which comes after Romans), and the Revelation (only the portion 9:10-17:2 is preserved, however).

Dionysius of Alexandria (c. 200-265) authenticated Hebrews as Paul's epistle, as well as owning James and 2 and 3 John and the Revelation as inspired Scripture.

Athanasius of Alexandria (298-373) applied the term 'canonical' to the exact 27 books of our canonical NT.

Summary of the formation of the New Testament canon

The NT canon was formed spontaneously, not by the action of church councils. The inspiration and intrinsic authority of each individual book were the determining factors in their eventual recognition and canonization.

By A.D. 200 the NT contained essentially the same books as we have today. These were regarded with the same authority and finality by Christians then as they are now.

In the 3rd century the *antilegomena* were debated. The book of Revelation was opposed in the East. Hebrews was controverted in the West. By the end of the 3rd cen. practically all the extracanonical books had been dropped from authoritative lists.

During the 4th cen., debate on questions of the canonical status of certain books practically ceased in the West, due to Jerome's and Augustine's influence and the clear distinctions made regarding the canon by Athanasius in Egypt. The Third Council of Carthage (397) sealed the decision reached, and from that time on no appreciable opposition to any of the NT books continued.

Debate in the East persisted, however, for some time longer. But the example of the West, of Athanasius in Alexandria, and the influence of the Cappadocian fathers, swept away all opposition. With the addition of 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude and the Revelation to the Peshitta (Syriac Bible), the question of the canon was settled for the East also. Thus the canonicity of the NT was settled, for all practical purposes, in the West around A.D. 400 and in the East by A.D. 500.

History of the canon till the present

Apart from a few very minor differences, the verdict of the first four centuries on the NT canon has remained the verdict of the church down to the present. During the Reformation the reformers insisted on the authority of an infallible Bible over against the alleged authority of an infallible church.

However, concerning the OT canon, the Roman church at the Council of Trent in 1546, by the *Decree Sacrosancta*, declared 11 of the 14 apocryphal books canonical. These are Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, the Song of the Three, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon. They also accepted later additions to the book of Esther.



St Sophia, Istanbul. The important fifth century Codex Alexandrinus was presented to King Charles 1 of England by the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1627.

Text of the New Testament

No other document from antiquity has influenced the Western world as much as the NT. Nor is the text of any ancient document so well attested. It exists in almost 5,000 Greek manuscripts (handwritten copies) and in more than 10,000 manuscripts which are copies of the early versions, besides in thousands of quotations from the church Fathers. The problem of textual criticism is to use these copies in order to determine by study and comparison the pure original text.

Sources for New Testament textual criticism

The papyri. As a result of a century of archaeological research, more than 75 papyrus fragments of the NT text now exist, designated by the letter P, with index numbers, as P1, P2. These date from the 2nd to the 8th cen., covering parts of 25 books, about 40 percent of the NT text. P52 contains parts of John 18:31-34, 37-38 and dates around AD. 135, being the oldest. P45, P46, P47 belong to the Chester Beatty Papyri I, II, 111 (c. A.D. 200). P66 is the famous

Bodmer Papyrus II of John's gospel, dating c. A.D. 200. P75 is the newly acquired Bodmer Payrus XIV-XV of John and Luke, dating c. A.D. 200.

Uncials. These are written on parchment in a semi-capital style letter, and were used in NT MSS. until c. 800. About 300 uncials exist.

Minuscules. Manuscripts of this class were executed in a cursive or running script and date from the 9th to the 18th cen. A total of 2,647 min uscules have been cataloged. **Versions.** The most valuable are those executed from the original Greek prior to 1000. Of these, the most important are the Old Latin (2nd cen.), the Vulgate (Latin) of Jerome (382-84), the Syriac (4th, 5th cen.), Coptic (2nd-4th cen.), Armenian (early 5th cen.), Old Georgian (5th cen.), Ethiopic and Gothic (mid 4th century).

Lectionaries. These are church service books containing Scripture lessons to be read throughout the year. About 2,000 lectionaries exist, both uncials and cursives. They date from c. 280 to c. 1600.

Ostraca and Talismans. Twenty-five ostraca and nine talismans (amulets) are now known engraved with portions of the NT test. They date from about the 4th to the 13th cen. **Quotations from the church Fathers.** More than 86,000 of these are known.

Oldest Old Testament manuscripts **The oldest Masoretic Hebrew MSS.** date not earlier than the later 9th cen. These are the Cairo Codex of the Prophets (AD. 895), the Aleppo Codex of the whole OT (c. 925) and the Leningrad Codex (completed AD. 1108). This ladder is used as the text of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*. The Dead Sea Scrolls, notably the two Isaiah MSS., discovered since 1947, however, give usa Hebrew text a millennium earlier, together with fragments of all but one 'of the OT books dating from the 2nd to the 1st century B.C.

Oldest New Testament manuscripts

Codex Sinaiticus, 4th century The NT is complete on 148 leaves. k was discovered by Tischendorf in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai in 1844 and 1859. Also it contains fragments of the OT in Greek.

Codex Alexandrinus (A), 5th cen. It contains most of the OT and NT. It was presented by the Patriarch of Constantinople to Charles 1 of England in 1627, and transferred to the British Museum in 1757.

Codex Vaticanus (B), 4th century This has been in the Vatican Library at Rome since 1481. It contains almost the complete OT and NT, except for Heb 9:14-13:25, the Pastoral Epistles, Philemon and the Revelation.

Codex Ephraemi (C), 5th cen. It contains 145 leaves of NT out of 238.

Codex Bezae (D), 5th cen. Not all the NT remains.

Chester Beatty Papyrus I (P45), early 3rd cen. It contains 30 leaves of the original papyrus codex of the gospels and Acts.

Chester Beatty Papyrus II (P46), early 3rd cen. Eighty-six of original 104 leaves of papyrus codex of Paul's epistles are in existence. **Chester Beatty Papyrus III** (P47), late 3rd cen. Ten leaves of original 32 of papyrus codex of Revelation are extant.

Bodmer Papyrus II (P66), early 3rd cen. One hundred fifty pages of a papyrus codex of the gospel of John are in existence.

Bodmer Papyrus XIV-XV (P75), early 3rd cen. All 144 pages out of an original 144 pages of the gospels of Luke and John were found.

English versions of the Bible

Early Anglo-Saxon versions.

Caedmon, by 680, had rendered Bible stories in common speech in poetic paraphrase, according to Bede. Bede (died 735) is credited with a translation of John's gospel. King Alfred (848-901) had portions of the Bible translated into the vernacular. But until the time of Wycliffe (14th cen.) and Tyndale (16th cen.), the Bible was translated into English only sporadically and piecemeal.

Wycliffe's version (1382). This was the first complete translation into English, revised c. 1400, condemned and burned in 1415. At least 170 MS. copies have survived. Its weakness was that it was based on the Latin Vulgate instead of the original Greek. **Tyndale's translation** (1525-35). Translated from the original Hebrew and Greek, the significance of Tyndale's version lies in its being first in a line of translations, so creative and impressive in its style that it formed the backbone of the Authorized King James Version of 1611.

The Coverdale version (1535). Miles Coverdale leaned on Tyndale's scholarly work. He supplemented it, where it had not been finished, by his own translation from German and Latin. He presented the first completed English Bible in print.

The Thomas Matthew Bible (1537). Largely a revision of Tyndale by Tyndale's friend John Rogers, it was nevertheless published under the name of Thomas Matthew.

The Taverner's Bible (1539), a revision by Richard Taverner of the Matthew Bible minus most of the notes and polemic data.

The Great Bible (1539) was the first authorized Bible, called 'great' from its size. It was also styled the 'Cranmer Bible' because of Archbishop Cranmer's preface to the second edition (1540).

The Geneva Bible (1560) was a revision of the Great Bible. The Geneva Bible was the first English Bible in the U.S., being the most common version among the Puritans. **The Bishops' Bible** (1568) was the second authorized English Bible and was intended to supersede the Geneva Bible, the Bible of the people, and the Great Bible, the pulpit Bible of the churches. The translation work was done mainly by scholarly bishops.

The Douay version (1609-10) was the first Roman Catholic Bible in English.

The King James Version (1611) was the culmination of these preceding early translations and revisions, and became the third 'authorized' English Bible, sponsored by James I of England. It employed the chapter divisions of Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury in the 13th cen., and the verse divisions of Robert Estienne (1551). This version reigned supreme from 1611 to 1881.

The Revised Version (1881-85). A revision of the King James Version based on a literal translation of the Greek and Hebrew texts by sixty-five English scholars.

The American Standard Version (1901). An American edition of the Revised Version of 1885, including preferred readings and format changes, by a group of American scholars under the direction of William H. Green of Princeton Seminary.

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1952); **New Testament** (1946). Authorized by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., widely used by denominations in that group and many not in its membership. Although this version has many excellencies, it is weak and obscure in its translation of certain key OT messianic passages.

The New English Bible: New Testament (1961). A completely new translation by English scholars under the direction of C.H. Dodd of Cambridge. It is aimed

at rendering the original Greek into idiomatic English, free from archaisms and from transient modernisms. It has enjoyed an enthusiastic reception in the U.S., but not without question by many evangelicals.

Modern speech translations

The Twentieth Century New Testament (1898-1901, revised 1904), by an anonymous group of scholars.

The New Testament in Modern Speech (1903), by Richard F. Weymouth, which has been revised twice by others.

The New Testament: A New Translation (1913), by James Moffatt. His Old Testament appeared in 1924 and a final revision in 1935.

The New Testament: An American Translation (1923), by Edgar J. Goodspeed, in American colloquial language.

The Riverside New Testament (1923, revised 1934), by William G. Ballantine.

The New Testament: A Translation in the Language of the People (1937), by Charles B. Williams.

The New Testament: The Berkeley Version in Modern English (1945), by Gerrit Verkuyl. The Old Testament was completed in 1959 by a group of conservative scholars.

The New Testament in Plain English (1952), by Charles Kingsley Williams.

An Expanded Translation of the New Testament (1956-59), by Kenneth S. Wuest.

The New Testament in Modern English (1958), by J. B. Phillips. Four previously published translations, beginning with *Letters to Young Churches* (1947), were published as a single volume New Testament in 1958.

The Amplified Bible: New Testament (1958), Old Testament (1962-64). The complete Bible was published in one volume in 1965. An attempt to add clarifying shades of meaning to the single-word English equivalents of key Hebrew and Greek words.

The New American Standard Bible: New Testament (1960-63). Complete Bible (1971). A revision of the *American Standard Version* (1901) by a group of conservative scholars.

The New International Version: New Testament (1973). Complete Bible (1978). New translation from Greek and Hebrew by an international team of conservative scholars.

The Living Bible: The Paraphrased Epistles (1962), *Living Prophecies: The Minor Prophets Paraphrased with Daniel and Revelation* (1965). **Complete Bible** (1971), by Kenneth N. Taylor.

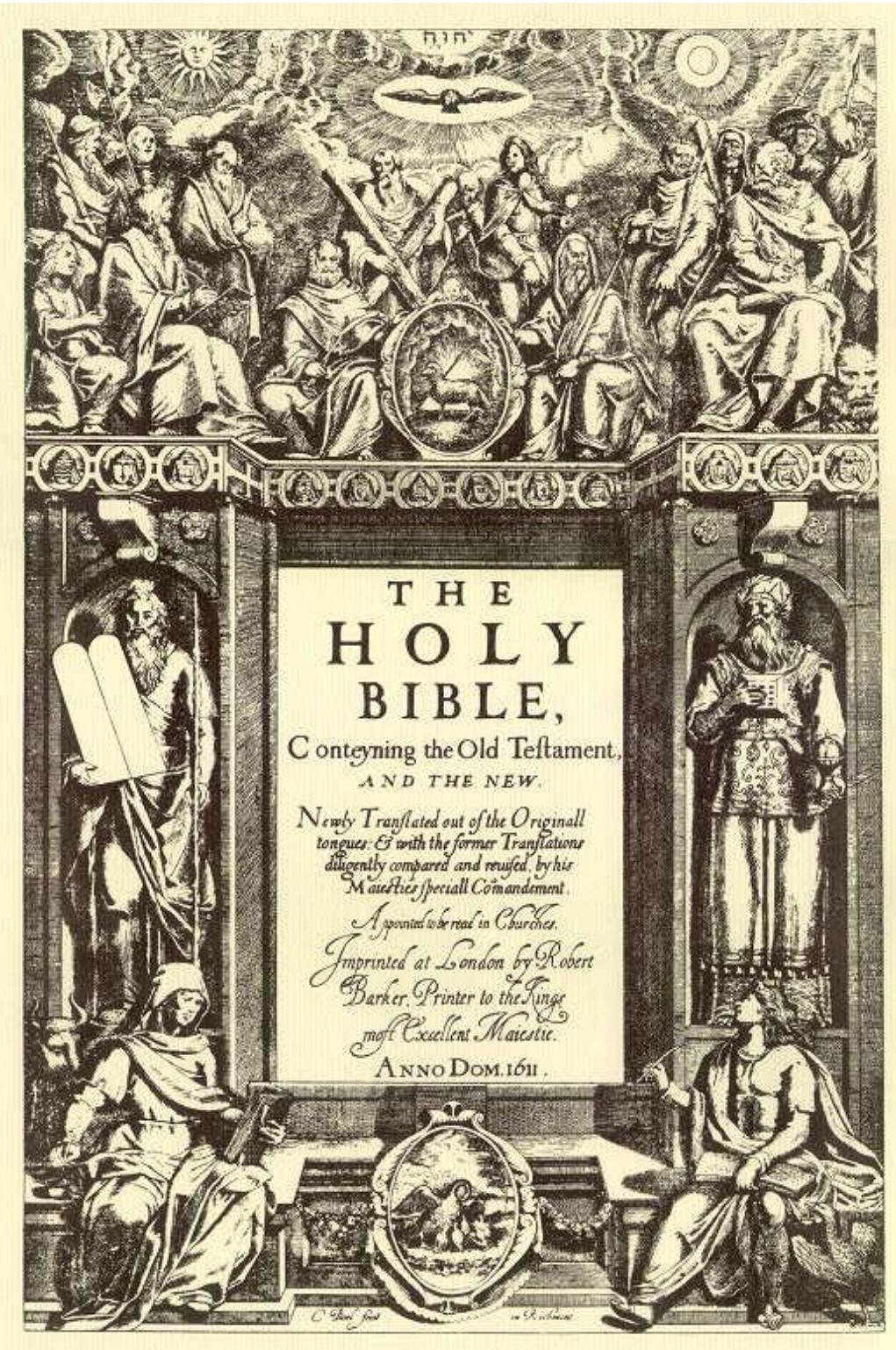
The New Testament in the Language of Today (1963), by William F. Beck.

Bible Statistics

Old Testament. Thirty-nine books, 929 chapters, 23,214 verses, 593,493 words. Middle book, Proverbs: middle chapter, Job 29; middle verses, 2 Chr 20:17-18; shortest book, Obadiah; about 30 extra biblical books mentioned.

New Testament. Twenty-seven books, 260 chapters, 7,959 verses, 181,253 words. Middle book, 2 Thessalonians; middle chapter, Romans 13; middle verse, Acts 17:17; shortest book, 2 John; shortest verse, John 11:35. The name 'Jesus' occurs 700 times in the gospels and Acts, less than 70 times in the epistles. The name 'Christ' occurs 60 times in the gospels and Acts, some 240 times in the epistles and the Revelation.

The Bible. Middle book, Micah; largest book, Psalms; shortest book, 2 John. The name Jehovah (Yahweh, Lord) occurs 6,855 times. The human authors number about 50. Chapter and verse divisions are of comparatively later origin. Johann Gutenberg completed the first Bible printed from movable type in 1456. First American edition of the Bible was printed in Boston about 1752.



Full Story of the King's James Translation of the Bible

In 1603 Queen Elizabeth I of England died and the crown was passed to James I, who was already King of Scotland as James VI. On his way to England to take his throne, he was presented with a petition, listing the grievances that the Puritan Party had against the Church of England. This petition became known as the ***Millenary Petition*** because it supposedly was signed by 1,000 people.

In England, the King James Version has always been known as the "Authorized Version", because it was authorized by the King to be read in churches. Because there was no such authorization in America, for us it remains the King James Version.

In response, King James convened a conference in 1604 at Hampton Court, where he surprised many of the clergy with his theological learning and understanding. However, not much was resolved at this Conference as far as dealing with the Puritan's grievances. In fact, 16 years later, many of these same Puritans would pack up and sail to America to avoid dealing with the Church of England. These became our Pilgrim Fathers, landing at Plymouth Rock in 1620.

The only substantial resolution that came from the Hampton Court Conference was that

"a translation be made of the whole Bible, faithful to the original Hebrew and Greek, and that this be set out and printed without marginal notes, and be used in all Churches of England in time of divine service."

This became the charter under

Creating a Bible to the King's Specifications

At this time there were three major versions of the English Bible in circulation. The **Bishops' Bible** was used in all Churches of England. The **Geneva Translation** was preferred by most Protestants for private reading and study. Those of Roman Catholic persuasion typically used the **Rheims-Douay Bible**.

It was generally recognized that the English translation used in the Bishops' Bible was inferior to that of the Geneva Translation. But the Geneva Translation had many marginal notes which had been written by Protestant Reformers. Some of the notes were critical of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. These notes were unacceptable to church leaders and even to King

James himself, who felt that they undermined the Divine Right of Kings. The King felt that a new English Bible would be the answer to both problems.

King James I wanted this new version to be created by university scholars, then reviewed by the bishops, and finally ratified by James himself. He insisted that there be no controversial Margin Notes. James thought that this was the best way to assure that the Bible would be satisfactory to the Church of England as well as to other Protestant denominations.

To the surprise of many, **King James took a significant part in organizing the translation project.** In fact, the rules that guided the translation had to be sanctioned by the King. The new Bible was to be based on the Bishops' Bible, however all original Hebrew and Greek sources were to be consulted, as well as all previous English Bible versions. This meant that **early Bibles, like Tyndale's and Coverdale's, were used in the creation of the text for the King James Version.**

To help avoid some of the problems of earlier English translations, the same Greek or Hebrew words could be translated differently based on their context. And they were. As an example, in I Corinthians 13:8-13, the Greek word "*katargeo*" appears four times, and is translated "*fail*", "*vanish away*", "*done away*", and "*put away*". This created a fresh translation that read well in English.

The Geneva Bible's practice of using italics for words that were not present in the original Hebrew or Greek was continued. Sometimes additional words that were not in the original language were needed to make the English read correctly. By printing these words in a different typeface, additions could be distinguished from the rest of the translation.

Proper names of Bible characters were to be spelled as they were in day-to-day usage. **This kept people like "Isaac" from getting a Hebraic name like "Isahac", which was how it was spelled in the Bishops' Bible.**

The only notes permitted in the margins were a) explanations of Hebrew and Greek words, and b) cross references to other Scripture. Headings were created for each chapter, providing a quick summary of the contents.

About 50 scholars were assigned to the project; each was personally approved by the King. Although each translator was given free room and board while he worked on the project, everyone was expected to donate his time gratis; no one got rich from this translation.

The translators were grouped into six sections — **three worked on the Old Testament, two on the New Testament, and one group translated the Apocrypha.**

When each of the groups had finished their section of the Bible, the results were reviewed by a committee of 12 men — two from each of the 6 groups. When they were finished revising the work, the entire Bible was forwarded to bishops and leading churchmen for their approval. Finally it was sent to James himself, for the final, royal approval — which occurred in 1610.

A Beautiful Volume, but Mixed Reception

The King James Version came off the presses in 1611. The massive book was almost 1,500 pages long! Even though the Title Page has the words: "Appointed to be read in Churches", neither the King nor Parliament had made such an appointment at that time. The first editions were printed using Black Gothic type in double columns. Between the Old and New Testaments, the Apocrypha was placed as a separate section. As in previous English Bible translations, the King James' Title Page featured beautiful engravings, which included Matthew, Mark, Luke, John the Beloved, Peter, Paul, Moses and Aaron.

The version was dedicated to King James, who had his hand in just about every area of the Bible's creation.

So popular was the King James Version, that it was printed three times in the year of its release, 1611. There were quite a number of mistakes (mostly typographical) in the early editions. Over the years, spelling was changed, mistakes were repaired, and marginal notes were modified. **Between the years 1611 and 1800, over 1,000 editions of the King James Version were published.**

That does not mean that everyone liked this new version. One highly-esteemed Biblical scholar of the day said that he had rather be

"rent into pieces by wild horses than any such translation by his consent should be urged upon our poor churches." He went on to say that *"the cockles of the sea shores, and the leaves of the forest, and the grains of the poppy may as well be numbered as the gross errors of this Bible."*

(He may not have liked the Bible, but he sure was poetic about it.) When the Puritans left England in 1620 on the Mayflower, it was the Geneva Translation

that they took with them — *not* the King James Version; they didn't like it either.

But eventually the tide of opinion changed; the King James Version was the best English version created up to that time, and its superiority eventually became recognized. The understanding of the Greek and Hebrew languages had greatly increased in the years since the release of the Bishops' Bible. This resulted in a Bible that was scholarly accurate -- a Bible that could be relied on.

But, for many, **the crowning jewel in the King James Version's crown is its use of the English language.** English literature had grown and matured by 1611. It was the 'Days of Shakespeare' -- the English Language was near its zenith. The revisers of the King James Version knew what good literature was, and were determined that this version would be a good example of English prose. They were *very* successful. At a time when the English Language was at its most majestic -- at a time when the standard for good literature was at its highest -- the King James Version became the finest example of English prose ever to be produced.

It was somewhere around 1630 before the King James Version had completely taken over the hearts of English people. And then, for more than two and a half centuries, the King James Version became *the* Bible for all English-speaking people.

Superiority of the King James Bible

Olga S. Opfell, The King James Bible Translators

Wide-ranging influence of enormous overall impact

Because the 1611 Bible is great literature, a true English classic, its influence on the world of letters has been profound. Lawrence Housman writes, "Not Shakespeare nor Bacon nor any great figure in English literature has had so wide and deep an influence on the form of all the literary and political world." One writer, in fact, once imagined what might happen if the King James Version were to suddenly disappear. "People would not know what the great writers were talking about."

The Royal Inspiration behind the translation

The most influential version of the Bible in the English-speaking world bears the name of one of England's most eccentric kings -- James I, the awkward,

slovenly, somewhat effeminate son of the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots. In no sense did he ever appear regal. He was goggle-eyed, contemporary accounts tell us, his legs were wobbly, and his tongue was too large for his mouth. But justifiably attributed refinements [include] his reputation as a paragon of learning, crammed with Greek and Latin and other tongues. In spite of his physical disabilities, his mind was first rate. Already at the age of seven he "was able, extempore ... to read a chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French and next out of French into English as well as few men could have added anything to his translation." In due time he became known as the most educated sovereign in Europe. Almost to the end of his life, book learning remained one of his chief passions. He was also tireless in theological discussions, where he was usually well informed.

The greatest work in all English literature

Winston Churchill calls the Authorised Version a veritable masterpiece. It was certainly a work of art. The translators frequently borrowed whole passages from earlier English Bibles, particularly Tyndales and Geneva. But take a look at the book of Romans, which echoes with the cadences of the Vulgate-derived Rheims version of 1582.

Olga Apfel notes the enormous influence of the King James Bible. She quotes Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch that the KJV "set a seal on ... national style, thinking, and speaking. Appealing to scholars as well as to humble men, it permeated the thinking of all classes. To this day its common expressions -- labour of love, lick the dust, clear as crystal, a thorn in the flesh, a soft answer, the root of all evil, the fat of the land, the sweat of thy brow, the shadow of death, the skin of the teeth -- are heard in everyday speech."

The influence can be traced throughout English civilization, on the home island and overseas, for the royal Bible served as the foundation stone that migrating Englishmen carried to the ends of the earth, and thus it forged a bond among various branches of the English race. American history -- political, religious, social, educational -- has been rooted in it. As Bliss Perry has said, "That the colonizing Englishmen of the seventeenth century were Hebrew in spiritual culture, the heirs of Greece and Rome without ceasing to be Anglo-Saxon in blood, is one of the basal facts in the intellectual life of the United States."

Beyond doubt, the generally matchless style of the King James Version has ennobled English speech and writing. The literary influence, to be sure, cannot always be distinguished from that of earlier versions. As John Livingston Lowes notes, through a long process, "the gradual exercise of something which approaches natural selection," there came about "in both diction and phraseology

a true survival of the fittest." Certainly the felicitous style also owes something to the fine quality of the original, particularly the Hebrew Old Testament.

The best of two unlike tongues

The diction and phraseology, Lowes tells us, are a marvelous fusion of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin elements of the English language. The Anglo-Saxon matches the Hebrew original in simplicity and directness; the Latin element brings sonority and stateliness. In certain sections one element predominates over the other; elsewhere the two are blended. To wit, large sections of the epistles draw heavily from the Rheims version, while the coinages of a few gems of English like "loving kindness" "tender mercy" "morning star" are right out of Miles Coverdale. The version then in widest use was the Geneva Bible, and certainly it was generally speaking, a quality translation. But King James and the higher clergy hated that version, with its blatant Calvinist slant, its cumbersome and partisan theological footnotes, and the taunting tone with which the Puritans and Calvinists brandished their "True Word of God." So the Archbishop of Canterbury, respectful of His Majesty King James' wishes, instructed that the principal source should be the Bishop's Bible, except where the original texts differed. But the Bishop's Bible had little to recommend it, except for the fact that it was "nihil obstat" to the Church Authorities. It wound up being generally ignored.

Political balancing act

So the translators had to walk something of a tightrope. The clergy -- and the King himself -- cordially hated the Geneva Bible, then the favorite of the people of the growing towns and cities. Since Henry the VIII a clear break with the church of Rome had existed, being reinforced by the upheavals of Henry's son and two daughters' reigns, and then the unifying outrage that England felt shortly in the aftermath of the gunpowder plot of Guy Fawkes and his fellows, just shortly after King James took the throne. The result was a translation that availed itself of the best of several earlier translations then at hand, but one that was careful not to admit any politically incorrect influences. The Geneva Bible and the Rheims New Testament were both too good as translations to just ignore, but the King James Version's debt to either was impolitic to acknowledge.

A 'goof' of the King James translators?

The translators of our 1611 version borrowed heavily from the Rheims New Testament of the Catholic exiles. (As Rheims itself had borrowed from Tyndale and others). But a limitation of all of these, to the degree they consulted the Vulgate but not the Greek, was the fact that the Greek was original, the Vulgate

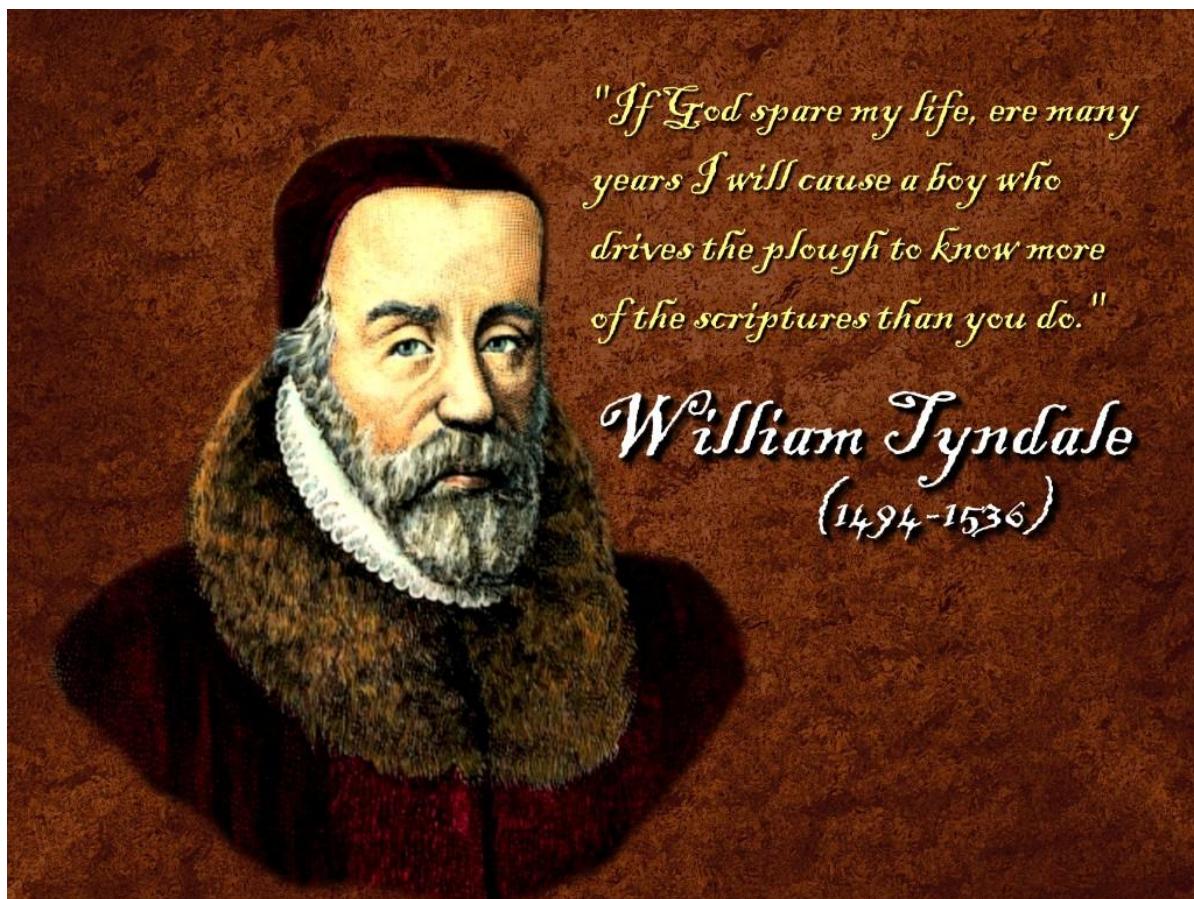
was not. I happen to suspect that some degree of mistranslation was therefore bound to occur. For example, the famous "Charity Chapter" of I Corinthians 13. This chapter was a favourite of Martin Luther King. As a theologian he was actually more at ease in Greek than in Latin. If the Latin *caritas* was a fair translation of the original *agape*, what is the best English word for it? Shouldn't *agape* have been rendered **love**?

Praise for the King James Version

Aside from the diction and phraseology, the rhythms of the King James Version, deeply rooted in emotion and stronger than in earlier English Bibles, have greatly influenced English style. The rhythms, the words, and the imagery crowd the works of British and American writers as varied as Sir Francis Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne, John Milton, John Bunyan, Jonathan Swift, Edmund Burke, Patrick Henry, Charles Lamb, Thomas de Quincy, William Blake, Thomas Babington Macaulay, Charles Dickens, John Greenleaf Whittier, Abraham Lincoln, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Thomas Carlyle, Herman Melville, John Henry Newman, John Ruskin, Thomas Hardy, T.S. Eliot, and Winston Churchill. Mary Ellen Chase claims that without the King James Version "there would be no Paradise Lost, no Samson Agonistes, no Pilgrim's Progress ... no Negro Spirituals, no Gettysburg Address" ... and none of the sonorous intonations or the thrilling appeals of Martin Luther King.

A Brief Declaration from the Sacraments with the KJV

1611



Views on this very subject, in April 1533, he chose to do it anonymously. The present treatise, therefore, could not have been published till a later date than the one just mentioned. But, besides this:

Expressing the First Original,
How They Came Up and Were Institute,
With the True and Most Sincere Meaning and
Understanding of the Same.

**VERY NECESSARY FOR ALL MEN,
THAT WILL NOT ERR IN
THE TRUE USE AND MEANING THEREOF.**

Compiled by the Godly Learned Man,
William Tyndale

Foreword and Notice

The copies of this treatise collated for the present reprint have been that in Day's folio edition of Barnes, Tyndale, and Frith. No date appears to have been assigned to the composition of this treatise; but it is placed, in Day, as the last of those there said to be "imprinted according to his [Tyndale's] first copies, which he himself set forth." On the other hand we find Tyndale, in a letter which he wrote to Frith soon after Christmas 1532, requesting him to "meddle as little as he could with the question of the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament," that the difference between them and the Lutherans might not give offense; and adding, that he had stopped Joye from publishing a treatise on that topic. And though Frith's imprisonment induced Tyndale to publish 'a short and pithy treatise,' defending his friend's if Stoughton has reprinted an earlier edition, and has not done it with extraordinary carelessness, the incorrectness of some of the imitations of Hebrew words in English letters is so glaring, (that of Mahond Dane for example,) that it can only be accounted for by supposing that Tyndale had no opportunity of revising the printer's work; who, where Tyndale's letters were not distinct, could only conjecture what they were intended for. When this is considered, and also the great obscurity in the composition of some of its paragraphs, the reader will perhaps think that Stoughton has described it more correctly as compiled, than Day as set forth, by Tyndale; whose MS. may have been in the hands of some friend, at the time of his imprisonment or martyrdom, and may thus have been printed without his revising care.

A FRUITFUL AND GODLY TREATISE

Expressing the Right Institution and Usage of the Sacrament of Baptism, And the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

To understand the pith of the sacraments, how they came up, and the very meaning of them, we must consider diligently the manners and fashions of the Hebrews, which were a people of great gravity and sadness, and earnest in all their doings, if any notable thing chanced among them; so that they not only wrote, but also set up pillars, and marks, and divers signs to testify the same unto their posterity, and named the places where the things were done with such names as could not but keep the deeds in memory. As Jacob called the place where he saw God face to face Pheniel, that is, God's face. And the place where the Egyptians mourned for Jacob seven days, the people of the country called Abel Miram, that is, the lamentation of the Egyptians; to the intent that such names should keep the gests and stories in mind.

And likewise in all their covenants they not only promised one to another and sware thereon, but also set up signs and tokens thereof, and gave the places

names to keep the thing in mind. And they used thereto such circumstances, protestations, solemn fashions, and ceremonies, to confirm the covenants, and to testify that they were made with great earnest advice and deliberation, to the intent that it should be too much shame and too much abomination, both before God and man, to break them ever after.

As Abraham, when he made a covenant of peace with Abimelech king of the Philistines, after they had eaten and drunk together, and sworn, he put seven lambs by themselves, and Abimelech received them of his hand, to testify that he there had digged a certain well, and that the right thereof pertained to him. And he called the well Beersheba, the well of swearing, or the well of seven, because of the oath, and of the seven lambs; and by that title did Abraham his children challenge it many hundred years after. And when Jacob and Laban made a covenant together, Genesis 31: they cast up an heap of stones in witness, and called it Galeed, the heap of witness; and they bound each other, for them and their posterity, that neither part should pass the heap to the other's countryward, to hurt or conquer their land: and Laban bound Jacob also, that he should take no other wives besides his daughters, to vex them. And of all that covenant they made that heap a witness, calling it the witness-heap; that their children should inquire the cause of the name, and their father should declare unto them the history.

And such fashions as they used among themselves, did God also use to them ward, in all his notable deeds, whether of mercy in delivering them, or of wrath in punishing their disobedience and transgression, in all his promises to them, and covenants made between them and him.

As when after the general flood God made a covenant with Noah and all mankind, and also with all living creatures, that he would no more drown the world, he gave them the rainbow to be a sign of the promise, for to make it the better believed, and to keep it in mind for ever; and he said: "When I bring clouds upon the earth, I will put my bow in the clouds, and will look on it, and remember the everlasting covenant made between God and all living creatures."

And Abram (which signifieth an excellent father) he named Abraham, the father of a great multitude of people; because he had promised to make him even so, and that his seed should be as the stars and as the sand of the sea innumerable. And that name gave he him as a seal of the promise to confirm it, and to strengthen the faith of Abraham and his posterity, and to keep the promise in mind, that they might have wherewith to bind God and to conjure him, as Moses and the holy prophets ever do, holding him fast to his own promise, and binding him with his own words, and bringing forth the obligation and seal thereof, in all times of necessity and temptation.

After that he made a covenant with Abraham, to be his God, and the God of his posterity, and their shield and defender; and Abraham promised for him and his seed to be his people, and to believe and trust in him, and to keep his commandments; which covenant God caused to be written in the flesh of Abraham, and in the males of all his posterity, commanding the males to be circumcised the eighth day, or to be slain: which circumcision was the seal and obligation of, the said covenant, to keep it in mind, and to testify that it was an earnest thing, whereby God challenged them to be his people, and required the keeping of his laws of them, and faith to trust in him only, and in no other thing, for help and succour, and all that can be needful and necessary for man; and whereby he condemned the disobedient and rebellious, and punished them; and whereby also the godly challenged him to be their God and Father, and to help and succour them at need, and to minister all things unto them according to all his promises.

And though the seal of this covenant were not written in the flesh of the females, yet it served the womankind, and bound them to God, to trust in him, and to keep his laws, as well as it did the men children; and the womankind, not circumcised in the flesh, yet through the help of the sign written in the males loving God's law, and trusting wholly in him, were truly circumcised in the heart and soul before God. And as the maid-children, believing and loving God, whereunto the outward circumcision bound them, were truly circumcised before God; even so the males, having the flesh circumcised, yet not believing nor loving God, whereunto the outward circumcision bound them, were uncircumcised before God, and God not bound to them, but had good right thereby to punish them: so that neither circumcision, or to be uncircumcised, is aught worth (as Paul saith, Romans 2.) save for the keeping of the law; for if circumcision help not to keep the law, so serveth it for nought, but for to condemn. And as the woman kind uncircumcised were in as good case as the males that were circumcised; even so the infants of the maids, which died uncircumcised, were in as good case as the infants of males which died circumcised. And in as good case by the same rule were the men-children that died before the eighth day: or else let them tell why.

The covenant, made between God and Abraham, saved the man-child as soon as it was born, yea, as soon as it had life in the mother's womb: for the covenant, that God would be God of Abraham's seed, went over the fruit as soon as it had life; and then there is no reason but that the covenant must needs pertain to the males as soon as to the females. Wherefore the covenant must needs save the males unto the eighth day; and then the covenant was, that the rulers should slay the males only, if their friends did not circumcise them; not that the circumcision saved them, but to testify the covenant only. And then it followeth, that the infants that die unbaptized, of us Christians, that would baptize them at due time

and teach them to believe in Christ, are in as good case as these that die baptized: for as the covenant made to the faith of Abraham went over his seed as soon as it had life, and before the sign was put on them; even so must needs the covenant, made to all that believe in Christ's blood, go over that seed as soon as it hath life in the mother's womb, before the sign be put on it. For it is the covenant only, and not the sign, that saveth us; though the sign be commanded to be put on at due time, to stir up faith of the covenant that sayeth us. And instead of circumcision came our baptism; whereby we be received into the religion of Christ, and made partakers of his passion, and members of his church; and whereby we are bound to believe in Christ, and in the Father through him, for the remission of sins; and to keep the law of Christ, and to love each other, as he loved us; and whereby (if we thus believe and love) we calling God to be our Father, and to do his will, shall receive remission of our sins through the merits of Jesus Christ his Son, as he hath promised.

So now by baptism we be bound to God, and God to us, and the bond and seal of the covenant is written in our flesh; by which seal or writing God challengeth faith and love, under pain of just damnation: and we (if we believe and love) challenge (as it is above rehearsed) all mercy, and whatsoever we need; or else God must be an untrue God. And God hath bound us Christian men to receive this sign for our infirmities' sake, to be a witness between him and us, and also to put this sign upon our children; not binding us to any appointed time, but as it shall seem to us most convenient, to bring them to the knowledge of God the Father, and of Christ, and of their duty to God and his law. And as the circumcised in the flesh, and not in the heart, have no part in God's good promises; even so they that be baptized in the flesh, and not in heart, have no part in Christ's blood. And as the circumcised in the heart, and not in the flesh, had part in God's good promises; even so a Turk unbaptized (because he either knoweth not, that he ought to have it, or cannot for tyranny,) if he believe in Christ, and love as Christ did and taught, then hath he his part in Christ's blood.

And though the outward circumcision, by the which God challengeth them to do him service, yea, whether they would or not, and by the which they were taught to believe in God, and in the seed of Abraham that should come and bless all the world, and to love the law; and certified them also, on the other side, of the good-will of God, if they so did; though (I say) it was the chief and most principal sign, (for so are such ceremonies called in the Hebrew, because they yet signify other things than appeareth to the outward sense,) yet God gave them divers other signs, both to stir up faith in the promise made them, and also to keep the benefit of the mercy of God in mind.

As in Exodus 13, all the first-born, both of man and beast, are sanctified and dedicated unto the Lord, for a remembrance that the Lord slew all the first-born

of Egypt; this did God command to be observed, that their children should ask why: and he commanded their fathers to teach their children, when they should ask what was meant thereby.

Also Exodus 20, the Sabbath is commanded to be observed, to be a sign, and to testify that God had sanctified and dedicated or chosen them, that they should be his people, to keep his laws, and that he would be their God, to keep them; and to testify also, that God hath created all things of nought in six days, and rested the seventh.

Also Numbers 10, where Almighty God commanded the children of Israel to blow a trumpet, when they entered into battle against their enemies; and promised that they should be thought upon before the Lord their God, and saved from their enemies. And likewise in their solemn feasts God commanded them to blow trumpets over the sacrifice; to be a sign unto them, that God would think on them, according to the covenant made in the blood of the sacrifice. Lo, the trumpets were commanded to be blown; not that God delighted in the noise of the trumpets, but in the faith of his people.

Also Numbers 15, the Israelites are commanded to make yellow gards upon their garments, to put them in remembrance to keep his commandments, that they should do nothing after their own imagination, nor observe any fashion that pleased their own eyes. Whereby ye see that ceremonies are not a service to God, but a service to man; to put him in mind of the covenant, and to stir up faith and love, which are God's spiritual sacrifices, in man's heart, etc.

And Joshua 4, when the water of Jordan had given place to go over by dry ground, God commanded Joshua to take twelve stones out of the bottom of Jordan, and to pitch them on the land, to keep the deed in memory; and commanded, when the children should ask what the stones meant, that their father should teach them.

In the 2 Kings 11, Ahijah the prophet tare the cloak of Jeroboam in twelve pieces, and bade him take ten; in sign that he should reign over ten of the tribes.

In 2 Kings 13, Eliseus made Joash king of Israel open a window eastward toward the Syrians, and made him to shoot out an arrow, and said, "It is the arrow of victory through the Lord against the Syrians." And that did he to establish the king's faith in God, that he should with God's help overcome the Syrians; and then he bade the king smite the ground with an arrow, and the king smote it thrice; whereby he prophesied, and certified the king, that he should thrice overcome the Syrians.

And Isaiah, in his 20th chapter, was commanded to go naked and barefoot; to be a sign that Egypt, in whom the children of Israel trusted, should be so carried away of Nabuchadnezzar.

And Jeremiah, in his 27th chapter, cometh among the people with bonds and chains put about his neck, and sheweth them unto all the kings of those countries, in token that they must be all under the yoke of Nabuchadnezzar king of Babylon. God so used to give them signs, that they would not believe without signs; as ye may see not only in the old Testament, but also in the new, how the Jews asked Christ, saying, "What sign dost thou shew us?" etc.

And Paul (1 Corinthians 1.), "The Jews asked signs."

Also Zacharias, John Baptist's father, asked a sign; and the angel gave it him. Christ's mother also asked a sign, and the angel gave her Elizabeth to a sign.

And unto the shepherds gave the angel a sign; as ye read Luke 2

And (Exodus 7) God gave the children of Israel the sign of Pesah, which we call the Easter lamb, for a sign that the time was come that the children of Israel should be delivered out of Egypt. And therefore God sent Moses and Aaron to them, which wrought many miracles among them, to stir up their faith to the promise of that deliverance, against the manifold and sore temptations to the contrary, through the most strait and grievous bondage and merciless oppression, and in that most specially, that Pharaoh was waxed ten times worse to them after the coming of Moses and Aaron than before. Yet in the last night, in which he had promised to smite the first-born of Egypt both of man and of beast, and to deliver them, he commanded them to take for every house a lamb or a kid, and to slay them, and to strike the door posts with the blood, to be a sign to them, and a seal of the promise that God would deliver them that night both out of the hands of Pharaoh, and also from the smiting of the angel that went about all Egypt, and slew the first-born in every house.

And this sign Pesah, beside that it was a seal of the promise to be delivered the same night, to stablish that faith, and commanded to be observed ever after yearly, to keep the benefit in memory; it was also a very prophecy of the passion of Christ, describing the very manner and fashion of his death, and the effect and virtue thereof also. In whose stead is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ come, as baptism in the room or stead of circumcision.

To see how Christ was prophesied and described therein, consider and mark, how that the kid or lamb must be with out spot or blemish; and so was Christ only of all mankind, in the sight of God and of his law. It must be taken up the tenth day of the first month, which is the tenth day of the first new moon in

March; for so count they their months from the new moon, and begin there in the time of March with us. And the same day came Christ to Jerusalem, there to be offered and to suffer his passion.

It must be offered the fourteenth day of the same month at night: and the same hour began Christ's passion; he was the same hour betrayed, and persecuted all night, and taken in the morning early. The fear of death was the same hour upon him, neither slept he any more after, but went immediately, as soon as he had comforted his disciples, into the place where he was taken, to abide his persecutors; where also he sweat water and blood of very agony conceived of his passion so nigh at hand.

The blood stricken on the posts saved them, that they were not plagued with the Egyptians, and delivered them out of the captivity of Pharao. And the blood of Christ, stricken on the posts of our consciences with a sure faith, delivereth us from the captivity of Pharaoh the devil, and smiting of his angels, etc. There might not a bone thereof be broken: no more were there of Christ's, though the two that were hanged with him had either of them his legs and his arms broken.

Moreover, that it was a very prophecy of the death of Christ, and of the virtue of his passion, it is made the more manifest by the words of Christ himself (Luke 22): for the night before his passion, when he had eaten Pesah with his disciples, he said, "I will no more eat of it henceforth, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." As who should say, 'This memorial which we yearly have hitherto observed, was once fulfilled in the kingdom of this world, when your fathers were delivered out of bondage and servitude of the Egyptians. But it hath yet another signification, hitherto unknown unto you, which must be fulfilled spiritually in the kingdom of God by my passion that is at hand, and blood that now shall shortly be shed; by the which ye shall be delivered out of the power of Satan, sin, and hell, and made heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Neither was it the lamb's blood that delivered you then: (for what regard hath God in the blood of sheep and calves?) but the blood of Christ (whom that lamb figured, and described his innocence, pureness, and obedience to his Father, and compassion to mankind-ward, whose feeble nature he had put on with all the infirmities of the same, save sin) did then deliver you, to bring you to the faith of this deliverance, and to make you through faith partakers thereof.'

Many things there be in the scripture, which have a carnal fulfilling, even there where they be spoken or done; and yet have another spiritual signification, to be fulfilled long after in Christ and his kingdom, and yet never known till the thing be done. As the serpent of brass which Moses hanged up in the wilderness, though it took effect carnally in the wilderness, yet it so describeth the lifting up of Christ upon the cross, and the virtue of his passion, that no tongue could better declare it, to make the heart feel it.

If ye ask: Why they may not be known till they be done, and what such prophecy may help? I answer, If men did understand them before they were done, they would endeavour to let the fulfilling of them; and when the signification is fulfilled, then to see how plainly it was described in the scripture doth exceedingly confirm the faith thereof, and make it better to be understood.

And when this Pesah was fulfilled spiritually in the kingdom of heaven by the death and blood shedding of Christ, it ended there: and in the room thereof (concerning that spiritual signification) came the sign of the sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, as baptism came instead of circumcision; things more easy, and less painful and tedious to be observed, and more gentle, to provoke and entice the heathen. For as the lamb described the death of Christ to come, and the manner of his passion, by which we should be delivered; even so doth the ceremony of the body and blood of Christ testify unto us, that he hath given himself to death for us, and redeemed us already, if we believe and cleave fast to the profession of our baptism, to walk therein, or will (if any tempest had driven us out of the right course) return to the right way again.

This to be so, the words of the institution declare, which are these (1Corinthians 11): "The Lord Jesus, the night that he was betrayed, took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body that shall be given for you: this do in remembrance of me. And likewise he took the cup, when supper was done, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do, as often as ye shall drink it, in the remembrance of me."

Here ye see by these words, that it was ordained to keep the death of Christ in mind, and to testify that his body was given and his blood shed for us. And, Luke 22: "This is my body, that is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. And this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you."

Lo, here ye see again that it was instituted to keep the death of Christ in mind; and to testify wherefore he died, even to save us from sin, death and hell, that we should seek none other means to be delivered with; for there is none other name for us to be saved by, but only by the name of Jesus. Acts 4. For as the children of Israel, stung of the fiery serpents, could have none other remedy to save them from present death, than to go and behold the brasen serpent hanged up by Moses in the wilderness, which looking on only healed them; even so, if the sting of death, which is sin, have wounded the soul with the working of the law in the consciences, there is none other remedy than to run to Christ, which shed his blood, hanging upon the cross, and to his everlasting testament and merciful promise, that it was shed for us for the remission of our sins. If thou be stung with conscience of sin, and the cockatrice of thy poisoned nature hath beheld herself in the glass of the righteous law of God, there is none other salve

for remedy, than to run to Christ immediately, and to the Father through him; and to say, ‘Father I have sinned against thee, and thy godly, holy, and righteous law, and against my brother, whom I ought of all right to love, for thy sake, as well as myself: forgive me, O Father, for thy dear son Jesus Christ’s sake, according to thy most merciful promises and testament; and I will ask my brother forgiveness (if the peace, I mean, be not made already), and will make to my power such satisfaction to him as shall seem right in his eyes, if he be reasonable; or as the congregation shall assign, or faithful men thereunto appointed by the congregation, or such as I and he shall agree upon; and will endeavour myself to do so no more, with the help of thy grace. And I will submit myself to the wholesome ordinance of the congregation, according to the doctrine of thy son Jesus and of his faithful apostles.’ For there is none other name given under heaven whereby we shall be saved, but only the name of Jesus.

Hereof ye see that the sacrament is an absolution of our sins, as often as we receive it, where it is truly taught and understood, and received aright.

Hereof ye see also, that as the Hebrews wrote their stories in covenants and signs, giving their signs such names as could not but keep them in mind; so God the Father did follow the ensample of the people (or they following him) and commanded his promises, covenants and prophecies, to be written in gestures signs and ceremonies, giving them names that could not but keep his covenants in mind. Even so Christ wrote the covenant of his body and blood in bread and wine; giving them that name, that ought to keep the covenant in remembrance.

And hereof ye see, that our sacraments are bodies of stories only; and that there is none other virtue in them, than to testify, and exhibit to the senses and understanding, the covenants and promises made in Christ’s blood. And here ye see that where the sacraments, or ceremonies, are not rightly understood, there they be clean unprofitable.

And as the circumcision in the flesh, their hearts still uncircumcised, hating the law of God and believing in their own imaginations, were circumcised to their damnation; and as the baptized in the flesh only, the heart still unclean, neither believing in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, neither loving their neighbor for Christ’s sake, are baptized also unto their greater damnation, (for though God hath right to all men, because he hath created and made man, yet to all such persons by reason of the sign and badge, and of their own consent, grant and promise, he hath more right to the calling of them to the keeping of his law, if they trust in him only; or to damn them, because when they know their duty, or might if they would, the sign moving them, and giving them an occasion to ask thereafter, and yet do it not;) even so all that come to the sacrament for any other purpose than it was ordained and instituted for, that is to say, to seek absolution

of their sins, with a set purpose to sin no more, as nigh as they can, and to call to emory the benefits of the passion of Christ, with the meditation to weaken the flesh, and to strength the spirit against her, and to give thanks again; that is to say, to call to mind how much he is bounden, for Christ's sake to love his neighbor, to help his need, and to bear his infirmity and to forgive him, if he have offended and desire forgiveness, promising to amend, whereunto Christ bindeth all that will be partakers of his blood; the same, I say, come thereto to their greater damnation. I pass over with silence the wicked and damnable doctrine of these servants of mammon, which for lucre pervert the true use of the sacrament, and hide it from the people for their gain teaching it to be a sacrifice instituted of God to help the souls of the dead in purgatory, and that it will make men rich, and bring them to such promotion as Christ never promised his disciples, but forbade it them.

Some will say, This sacrament needed not, baptism is enough; baptism is a receiving into religion, and there is the covenants made, what we shall do and what we shall have: and baptism is a sign whereby God hath right to us, and we to God and to Christ; and whereby every man hath right to call other to do their duties, and to rebuke them that will not. Neither our salvation so greatly standeth in that or any other sacrament, that we could not be saved without them, by preaching the word only. Nevertheless God hath written his will, to have his benefits kept in memory, to his glory and our benefit, and namely this benefit of all benefits, wherein only the pith of our salvation resteth. Therefore though the effect of it be signified by baptism, and though we be baptized to believe in the death of Christ, and to die with him by the mortifying of the flesh; yet doth this sacrament, through the rehearsing of the covenant, and breaking of the bread, and pouring out of wine, much more lively express the whole story, and keep it better in memory, by daily repeating thereof, and hath more might and vehemency to heal the conscience stung with fresh sin. For the nature of man is so weak, so feeble, and so frail, that he cannot but sin, as there is no man that liveth and sinneth not.

And when he is so fallen, then the law looketh upon him with so terrible a countenance, and so thundereth in his ears, that he dare not abide, but turneth his back and to go; and the enemy assaileth him on the other side, to persuade him that God hath cast him away, saying, 'They that be God's have power to keep his law: thou hast not, but breakest them; ergo, thou art a cast-away and a damned creature:' and hell gapeth, and setteth open her mouth beneath to devour him. And the flesh also wrestleth with the spirit, to keep him down, and to take him prisoner, and to stop his mouth, that he cry no more upon her, that she might sin at pleasure without all fear.

The careless swine, that consent unto sin, feel not these things; neither yet the hypocrites, that have put a visard on the face of the law, and make her look with such a countenance as pleaseth them: but the poor folks, that have the eyes open, and consent, and fain would do the law, they feel that cannot be expressed with tongue. Neither is there living any man, that feeleth the virtue and power of the blood of Christ, which hath not first felt the strong pains of hell.

Seeing then that man is so sick, so prone and ready to fall, and so cruelly invaded when he hath sinned of the fiend, the flesh, and the law, that he is oft put to flight, and feared and made to run away from his Father; therefore hath the God of all mercy, and of infinite pity and bottomless compassion, set up this sacrament as a sign on a high hill, whence it may be seen on every side, afar and near, to call again them that be fled and run away. And with this sacrament he (as it were) clucketh to them, as an hen doth for her chickens, to gather them under the wings of his mercy; and hath commanded his sacrament to be had in continual use, to put them in mind of mercy laid up for them in Christ's blood, and to witness and testify it unto them, and to be the seal thereof. For the sacrament doth much more vehemently print lively the faith, and make it sink down into the heart, than do bare words only: as a man is more sure of that he heareth, seeth, feeleth, smelleth and tasteth, than that he heareth only.

Now when the words of the testament and promises are spoken over the bread, "This is my body that shall be broken for you," "This is my blood that shall be shed for you;" they confirm the faith: but much more when the sacrament is seen with the eyes, and the bread broken, the wine poured out or looked on; and yet more when I taste it and smell it. As ye see when a man maketh a promise to another with light words between themselves, and as they be departed, he to whom the promise is made beginneth to doubt whether the other spake earnestly or mocked, and doubteth whether he will remember his promise, to bide by it or no;: but when any man speaketh with advisement and deliberation, the words are then more credible; but yet if he swear, it confirmeth the thing more; and yet the more if he strike hands, if he give earnest, if he call record, if he give his hand-writing, and seal it; so is the promise more and more believed. For the heart gathereth, 'Lo, he spake with advisement and deliberation; and with good sadness he sware; he clapped hands, called records, and put to his hand and seal: the man cannot be so reign'd without the fear of God, as to deny all this; shame shall make him bide by his promise, though he were such a man that I could not compel him if he would deny it.' If a young man break a ring between him and a maid; doth not the fact testify and make a presumption to all men, that his heart meant as his words spake?

Manoah, Samson's father, when he had seen an angel, Judges 13, he said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen the Lord." But his wife

gathered other comfort of the circumstances, and said, "If the Lord would kill us, he would not have received such offerings of our hands, nor shewed us such things as he hath, nor told us of things to come." Even so our hearts gather of the circumstances, protestations, and other miracles and earnest ceremonies of God, good arguments and reasons, to stablish our weak faith withal, such as we could not gather at bare words only.

And thus we dispute: God sent his Son in our nature, and made him feel all our infirmities that move us to sin; and named him Jesus, that is to say, Savior, because he should save his people from their sins. Matthew 1. And after his death he sent his apostles to preach the things or tidings, and to thrust it in at the ears of us, and set up a sacrament of it, to testify it, to be a seal of it, to thrust it in, not at the ears only by the rehearsing of the promises and testament over it, neither at our eyes only in beholding it, but beat if; in through our feeling, tasting and smelling also; and to be repeated daily, and to be ministered to us. He would not (think we) make half so much ado with us if he loved us not, or if he would not have us fain come, and be as merciful to us as he was to his friends in the old time, that fell and rose again. God so then used to the Jews (to whom all ceremonies were first given, and from whom they came to us) even such fashions as they used among themselves, in all his promises and covenants, not for his necessity, but for ours; that such things should be a witness and testimony between him and us, to confirm the faith of his promise, that we should not waver nor doubt in them, when we look on the seals of his obligations, wherewith he hath bound himself; and to keep the promises and covenants better in mind, and to make them the more deep sink into our hearts, and to be more earnestly regarded, and that we should ask what such things meant, and why God commanded them to be observed; that ignorance should not excuse, if we know not what we ought to do and believe: for natural reason ought to teach us that the outward, corporal, and bodily thing cannot help the spiritual soul, and that God hath not delectation in such fantasy. Now if we were diligent to search for the good will of God, and would ask what such ceremonies meant, it were impossible but then God (which hath promised, Matthew 7, "If we seek we shall find,") would send us true interpreters of his signs or sacraments.

And he that, being of a lawful age, observeth a ceremony and knoweth not the intent, to him is the ceremony not only unprofitable, but also hurtful, and cause of sin; in that he is not careful and diligent to search for it, and he there observeth them with a false faith of his own imagination, thinking, as all idolaters do and ever have done, that the outward work is a sacrifice and service to God. The same therefore sinneth yet more deeper and more damnable. Neither is idolatry any other thing than to believe that a visible ceremony is a service to the invisible God; whose service is spiritual, as he is a spirit, and is

none other thing than to know that all is of him, and to trust in him only for all things, and to love him for his great goodness and mercy above all, and our neighbors as ourselves for his sake: unto which spiritual serving of God, and to lead us to the same, the old ceremonies were ordained.

These be now sufficient concerning the intent and use of the ceremonies, and how they came up. Now let us consider the words of this testament and promises, as they be rehearsed of the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, and of the apostle Paul: for John, which wrote last, touched nothing that was sufficiently declared of other. Matthew, in the twenty-sixth, thus saith: "When they were eating, Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body: and he took the cup, and thanked, and gave it them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood, which is of the new testament, that is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26)

First, ye see by these words, that the body was given to death, and the blood shed, for the remission of sins, and that for many. But who are these many? Verily, they that turn to God, to believe in him only, and to endeavor themselves to keep his law from henceforth. Which many yet, in respect of them that love not the law, are but very few, and even that little flock that gave themselves wholly to follow Christ. Wherefore if any man think he believe in Christ, and have not the law written in his heart, to consent that his duty is to love his brother for Christ's sake as Christ loved him, and to endeavor himself so to do, the faith of that same man is vain, and built upon sand of his own imagination, and not upon the rock of God's word; for his word, unto which he hath bound himself, is, that they only which turn to God, to keep his laws, shall have mercy for Christ's sake. "Drink of it all, for it is my blood of the new testament." "for it is," that is to say, the drink that is in the cup, or, if ye list, the cup is "my blood of the new testament," taking the cup for the drink, by a manner of speaking used in all tongues; as when we say, 'I have drunk a cup of wine,' we take there the cup for the wine. "My blood of the new testament," that is to say, My blood, for whose shedding sake this new testament and covenant is made to you, for the forgiveness of sin.

The old testament made between God and your fathers in mount Sinai, in which life was promised to them only that kept it, and to the breakers death, wrath and vengeance, and to be accursed, and no mention made of mercy, [which]was confirmed with blood, Exodus 24. Moses offered half the blood to God, and sprinkled the people with the other half, to confirm the covenant and to bind both parties: neither was there any covenant made that was not confirmed with blood, as it is rehearsed in Hebrews 4; and as we see in the books of Moses, whose custom of blood-shedding was not only to confirm those old covenants,

but also to be a prophecy of the blood that should be shed to confirm this testament. That old, cruel, and fearful testament, which drew the people away, so that they durst not abide the voice of thunder, nor the terrible sight of the fire, but went and stood afar off, was confirmed with the blood of calves: but this new and gentle testament, which calleth again, and promiseth mercy to all that will amend, as it is a better testament, so is it confirmed with a better blood, to make men see love, to love again, and to be a greater confirmation of the love promised. For if he gave us his Son, what will he deny us? If God so loved us, when we were sinners and knew him not, that he gave his Son for us; how much more loveth he us now, when we love again, and would fain keep his commandments!

In the old covenants the people were sprinkled with blood of calves without, in their bodies, to bind them to keep the law; else we were bound to just damnation, for the breaking of it. Here it is said, "Drink of it every one," that your souls within may be sprinkled, and washed through faith, with the blood of the Son of God for the forgiveness of sin, and to be partakers of a more easy and kind testament, under which, if you sin through fragility, you shall be warned lovingly, and received to mercy, if you will turn again and amend.

Mark, in the fourteenth: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body: and he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he took it to them, and they all drank of it: and he said to them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." This is all one with Matthew, as is aforesaid.

Luke, in the twenty-second: "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it and gave to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also, when he had supped, he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you."

Here is also to be noted, that the cause of the institution was to be a memorial, to testify that Christ's body was given, and his blood shed for us. And again, where Matthew and Mark said, "This is my blood in the new testament;" Luke saith, "This cup is the new testament in my blood which shall be shed for you." This is a strange speaking, and far from the use of our tongue, to call the sign and confirmation by the name of the thing that is signified and confirmed. The testament is, that Christ's blood is shed for our sins: and Christ saith, "This cup is that testament;" signifying thereby, that the thing that is meant by this ceremony is, that we believe that his blood-shedding is the remission of our sins; which is the very testament.

Paul, 1 Corinthians 11, saith on this manner: “That which I delivered unto you I received of the Lord. For the Lord Jesus, the same night in the which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take ye, and eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shall shew the Lord’s death until he come.”

As Matthew and Mark agree in these words, so do Lucas and Paul. And as it is above declared upon the words of Luke, and so here by oft repeating one thing: (“This do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do as oft as ye drink it in the remembrance of me.”) Again, “As oft as ye shall eat of this bread and drink of this cup, so oft ye must declare the Lord’s death:”) by this often repeating, I say, ye may evidently perceive that the cause, intent, and whole purpose of the institution of this sacrament was to testify and confirm the faith of the testament made in the death of Christ; how that, for his sake, our sins shall be forgiven.

So, “Do this in the remembrance of me:” that is to say, ‘Take bread and wine, and rehearse the covenant and testament over them, how that my body was broken, and my blood shed for many: and then give them to the people to eat and drink, to be a sign and earnest, and the seal of the testament; and cry upon them, without ceasing, to believe in me only for the remission of sins, and not to despair, how weak soever they be, only if they hang on me, and desire power to keep the law after my doctrine and example of my life, and do mourn and be sorry because they cannot do that good thing which they would.’

For, saith Paul, “Whosoever shall eat of this bread or drink of the cup of the Lord unorthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:” that is to say, whose receiveth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ with an unclean heart, not forsaking the old lusts of the flesh, nor purposing to follow Christ, and to be to his neighbour as Christ was to him, only merciful; the same sinneth against the body and blood of Christ; in that he maketh a mock of the earnest death of Christ, and, as it is written Hebrews the tenth, “treadeth Christ under foot, and counteth the blood of the testament wherewith he was sanctified as an unholy thing, and doth dishonor to the Spirit of grace.”

Of this ye may perceive again what the sacrament meaneth, and what the intent of the ordinance was, and how such ceremonies came up, and whence they had their beginning, and what the fruit thereof is, and what is therein to be sought. And though this were enough, so that I might here well cease; yet, because the unquiet, scrupulous, and superstitious nature of man, wholly given to idolatry, hath stirred up such traditions about this one sacrament most specially, I cannot

but speak thereof somewhat more, and declare what my conscience thinketh in this matter.

Ye shall understand therefore that there is great dissension, and three opinions, about the words of Christ, where he saith, in pronouncing the testament over the bread, "This is my body;" and in pronouncing it over the wine, "This is my blood."

One part say that these words, "This is my body," "This is my blood," compel us to believe, under pain of damnation, that the bread and wine are changed into the very body and blood of Christ really: as the water at Cana Galilee was turned into very wine.

The second part saith, 'We be not bound to believe that bread and wine are changed; but only that his body and blood are there presently.'

The third say, 'We be bound by these words only to believe that Christ's body was broken, and his blood shed for the remission of our sins; and that there is no other satisfaction for sin than the death and passion of Christ.'

The first say these words, "This is my body," "This is my blood," compel us to believe, that things there shewed are the very body and blood of Christ really. But bread and wine, say they, cannot be Christ's natural body; therefore the bread and wine are changed, turned, altered, and transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ. And they of this opinion have busied themselves in seeking subtleties and similitudes to prove, how the very body and blood might be there under the similitude of bread and wine only, the very bread and wine being thus transubstantiated.

And these men have been so occupied in slaying all that will not captive their wits to believe them, that they never taught nor understood that the sacrament is an absolution to all that thereby believe in the body and blood of Christ.

The second part grant with the first, that the words compel us to believe that the things shewed in the sacrament are the very body and blood of Christ. But where the first say 'bread and wine cannot be the very body and blood of Christ,' there they vary and dissent from them, affirming that bread and wine may, and also is, Christ's body really, and very blood of Christ; and say, that 'it is as true to say that bread is Christ's body, and that wine is his blood, as it is true to say Christ being a very man is also very God.' And they say, 'As the Godhead and manhood in Christ are in such manner coupled together, that man is very God, and God very man; even so the very body and the bread are so coupled, that it is as true to say that bread is the body of Christ, and the blood so annexed there with the wine, that it is even as true to say that the wine is Christ's blood.'

The first, though they have slain so many in and for the defence of their opinion, yet they are ready to receive the second sort to fellowship, not greatly striving with them or abhorring the presence of bread and wine with the very body and blood, so that they yet by that means may keep him there still, and hope to sell him as dear as before, and also some to buy him, and not to minish the price.

The third sort affirm, that the words mean no more but only that we believe, by the things that are there shewed, that Christ's body was broken and his blood shed for our sins, if we will forsake our sins and turn to God to keep his law. And they say that these sayings, "This is my body," and, "This is my blood," shewing bread and wine, are true as Christ meant them, and as the people of that country, to whom Christ spake, were accustomed to understand such words, and as the scripture useth in a thousand places to speak. As when one of us saith, 'I have drunk a cup of good wine,' that saying is true as the man meant; that he drank wine only, and not the cup; which words haply, in some other nation's ears, would sound that he drank the cup too. And as when we say of a child, 'This is such a man's very face;' the words are true, as the manner of our land is to understand them, that the face of the one is very like the other. And as when we say, 'He gave me his faith and his truth in my hand,' the words are true as we understand them; that he struck hands with me, or gave earnest in sign or token that he would bide by his promise. For the faith of a man doth alway rest in his soul, and cannot be given out, though we give signs and tokens of them. Even so, say they, we have a thousand examples in the scripture, where signs are named with the names of things signified by them: as Jacob called the place, where he saw the Lord face to face, Pheniel, that is, God's face, when he saw the Lord face to face. :Now it is true to say of that field, that it is God's face, though it be not his very face. The same field was so called to signify that Jacob there saw God face to face.

The chief hold and principal anchor that the two first have, is these words, "This is my body: This is my blood." Unto these the third answereth as is above said. Other texts they allege for themselves, which not only do not strength their cause, but rather make it worse: as the sixth of John; which they draw and wrest to the carnal and fleshly eating of Christ's body in the mouth, when it only meaneth of this eating by faith. For when Christ said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," this cannot be understood of the sacrament. For Abraham had life, and all the old holy fathers; Christ's mother, Elizabeth, Zacharias, John Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and all the apostles, had life already by faith in Christ; of which not one had eaten his flesh, and drunken his blood, with their bodily mouths. But truth it is, that the righteous liveth by his faith; ergo, to believe and trust in Christ's blood is the eating that there was meant, as the text well proveth. If they say, We grant that life cometh by faith; but we all that believe must be baptized to keep the law and

to keep the covenant in mind; even so all that liveth by faith must receive the sacrament: I answer, The sacrament is a confirmation to weak consciences, and in no wise to be despised; howbeit many have lived by faith in the wilderness, which in twenty, thirty, or forty years have not received the sacrament. Notwithstanding, this oration is nothing to the purpose. For Christ spake to the blind and unbelieving Jews; testifying to them, that they could have no life except they should first eat his flesh, and drink his blood: ergo, this eating and drinking is meant only of that thing that first bringeth life into the soul, and that is faith, by your own confession. And therefore must it be understood of faith only, and not of the sacrament.

And Matthew, the last [chapter]: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;” which may well be understood, and so was it of old doctors, by his spiritual being with us by faith, and in his Spirit. And so may that text of Matthew 18, be understood: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” There is many times two or three good men that meet together in Christ’s name, where the sacrament is not. And Paul (Ephesians 3) boweth his knees for the Ephesians to God, “That he would give them his riches, to be strengthened with his Spirit, that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith.” Where the heart then believeth in Christ, there dwelleth Christ in the heart; though there be no bread in the heart, neither yet in the maw.

The two first parties taking the old doctor’s to be on their side, I answer, Many of the old doctors spake so mystically that they seem sometimes to affirm plainly that it is but bread and wine only concerning the substance, and that it is a figure of the body and blood of Christ only; and sometimes, that it is his very body and blood: therefore it were needless to wade any further herein.

And unto them of the second opinion, that the bread is his very body, I answer, Ye must remember that the old doctors as earnestly call it a sacrifice, as they do Christ’s body. But that ye deny: and say, with the epistle to the Hebrews, that he was but once sacrificed for altogether, when he offered and sacrificed himself to the Father for our sins, and can now no more be sacrificed. Christ dieth no more now, and therefore is no more sacrificed. Neither do we properly offer him to God. But he in his mortal flesh offered himself for us to God the Father, and purchased therewith a general pardon for ever. And now doth God the Father proffer him, and giveth him to us. And the priests, in God’s stead, proffer him and give him unto the people, for a remission and absolution of their sins daily, if they by the moving and stirring of the sacrament believe in the body and blood of Christ.

Wherefore ye ought of no right to be angry with them of the third opinion, though they deny the doctors, where they seem to say that the sacrament is the very body of Christ; as they be not angry with you, when ye deny them, where

they as earnestly affirm that it is a sacrifice. Nevertheless they answer, that doctors call it a sacrifice only because it is the memorial, the earnest and seal of that everlasting sacrifice offered once for all. And even so say they that the doctors called the sacrament the body and blood of Christ after the same manner only; because it is the memorial, the earnest, and seal of his body and blood, as the use of the scriptures is to call signs by the names of things signified thereby.

And unto them of the first opinion I answer, with the same reason, that it is impossible that the sacrament should be a very sacrifice. For neither the sacrifices of the old law which prophesied the sacrificing of Christ, neither yet our redemption, was fulfilled that night. For if the scriptures and prophecies were then fulfilled, and we then redeemed, Christ died on the morrow in vain; and false are the apostles and evangelists, that preach his body-breaking and blood-shedding under Pontius Pilate, by the persecution of Caiaphas and Annas, to be our redemption.

Moreover, for all the breaking and dividing of the sacrament of his body among his apostles, his body abode still alive; and for all the pouring out of the sacrament of his blood, of the pot into the cup, and out of the cup into the mouths and bellies of his disciples, he bled as fresh on the morrow as though he had bled then nothing at all.

He was verily much more easily sacrificed that night, in the breaking and dividing of the bread and pouring out of wine, than he was on the morrow. The sacrament was that night, no doubt, but a description of his passion to come; as it is now a memorial of his passion past. He instituted the manner of the sacrament then, and taught his disciples also that they after understood, when he was risen again, and not then, as they never had capacity to understand him when he spake of his death. For they then imagined carnally of Christ (as the Jews yet do) that Christ should never die, (as he did not, concerning his Godhead,) but should live ever bodily, as he now doth concerning his resurrection.

Wherefore, seeing that all the doctors with one accord call the sacrament so earnestly a sacrifice, they cannot otherwise understand than that they so say after the use of the scripture only, because it is the memorial of the sacrifice of his death and blood-shedding. Why should they then of right be offended, if we understand the doctors after the same manner, when they call it his body and blood; and that they so call it after the use of the scripture, because that it is only a memorial of his body and blood?

As concerning the transubstantiation: I think that such a speech was among the old doctors, though they that came after understood them amiss. Their hearts were gross, through busying themselves too much with worldly business. For

the bread and wine are but only bread and wine, till the words of the testament be rehearsed over them; and then they cease to be any more bread and wine in the hearts of the true believers: for the heart, after these words once spoken, thinketh only upon the covenant made in the body and blood of Christ, and through faith eateth his body, and drinketh his blood; though the eyes, and other senses, perceive nothing but bread and wine: as when a man sometime seeketh for text in the bible, he seeth paper and ink and the figures of letters; yet his heart not once thinketh of any other thing than on the words and sense of his text.. And thereof, no doubt, came up this transubstantiation through false understanding.

Another thing is this, none of those wicked heretics which denied Christ to be very God, or any of them that denied Christ to be man or to have a very body, save a fantastical body, did cast the true believers in the teeth at any time, of the faith of Christ's body present in their sacrament everywhere; which thing it is not like but they would have done, if that opinion had then been a general article of the faith.

Neither was there any heresy, or diversity of opinion, or disputing about the matter, till the pope had gathered a council to confirm this transubstantiation: wherefore it is most likely that this opinion came up by them of latter days.

Furthermore, all the law and prophets seek, all that Christ did or can yet do, is to bring us to believe in him, and in God the Father through him, for the remission of sins; and to bring us unto that which immediately followeth out of that belief, to love our neighbors for his sake as he loved us. Wherefore if Christ did put his bodily presence in the sacrament, and would we should believe it; it is done only to bring us to this faith. Now is this faith no where less had, than where that opinion is most strong; neither so cruelly persecuted of Jew or Turk, as of them that most fervently defend that opinion. True faith maketh a man to love his brother: but that opinion maketh them to hate and slay their brethren, that better believe in Christ than they of that opinion do; and that murder do they, for fear of losing that they have gotten through that opinion.

Item, they of this opinion, instead of teaching us to believe in Christ, teach us to serve Christ with bodily service, which thing is nought else but idolatry. For they preach, that all the ceremonies of the mass are a service to God by reason of the bodily works, to obtain forgiveness of sins thereby, and to deserve and merit therewith. And yet Christ is now a spiritual substance with his Father, having also a spiritual body; and with the Father to be worshipped, in spirit only. And his service in the spirit is only to believe in him for the remission of sin, to call upon him, and give him thanks, and to love our neighbors for his sake.

Now all works done to serve man, and to bring him to this point, to put his trust in Christ, are good and acceptable to God; but, done for any other purpose, they be idolatry and image-service, and make God an idol or bodily image.

Again, seeing the faith of the testament in Christ's blood is the life of the righteous, from the beginning of the world to the end; and forasmuch as the sacrament was instituted only to bring to this life; now when they which think not the body to be present in the sacrament have by the preaching and confirmation of the sacrament obtained this life or stedfast faith in Christ's blood, and by the daily use of the sacrament are more and more hardened therein, and in the love that springeth thereof; what reasonable cause have the contrary part (which believe the body present, and bread turned into the very body as flesh, bones, hair, sinews, nails, and all other, as he was put on the cross, of length and quantity, I cannot tell what) to rail on us as heretics, hate, persecute, and slay us most cruelly as enemies? Christ saith, Qui contra me non est, mecum est, "He that is not against me is with me." Now they that believe in Christ for the remission of their sins, and for his sake love their foes, are not Christ's enemies; ergo, they be on Christ's side. Why then should they, that boast themselves to be Christ's friends, slay them? Faith in Christ's blood, and in the Father through him, is God's service in the spirit. And so have they, which believe not the bodily presence, served God a long time, and thereto been holpen by the sacrament. The other part fallen there from through preaching the body present, serving God with bodily service, (which is idolatry, and to make God an idol or image,) in that they trust in the goodness of their works (as they which serve tyrants), and not in the goodness of God through trust in the blood of Christ: ergo, they that believe not the bodily presence (not a little thereto compelled through the wicked idolatry of the contrary belief) are not to be thought so evil as the other would have them seem to be.

Paul teacheth, (1 Corinthians 13) that if a man had all other gifts that God can give man, and had not charity to love his neighbour, it helpeth not. For all other gifts, and the remission in Christ's blood also, are given him of God, to bring him to love his neighbour; which thing had, a man hath all; which not had, a man hath nothing.

And, Philippians 2, how sweetly and how vehemently conjureth he them to draw all one way, to be of one accord and one mind or sentence; and to do nothing of strife or of vainglory, that is to say, of hate or disdain one of another, or of affection to himself for to seem glorious; but each to prefer other through meekness, and to have his [own] opinion suspect, and to fear lest he hath not obtained the understanding; rather than of presumption to his own wit to despise and hate the contrary party, and persecute as a tyrant! And in the third of the same, Paul saith: "Let as many as be perfect," (that is to say, be truly taught, and

know the law truly, and her office, and the office and effect of faith, and know which be good works before God, and what the intent of them is,) “let us,” saith he, “so far as we be come, proceed in one rule, that we may be of one accord. “Now hitherto we be all come, and this general rule have we gotten, that faith only justifieth, that is to say, that the sin is forgiven only for Christ’s sake; and again, that our duty is to love our neighbours no less than Christ loved us: wherefore let us proceed forth in this rule, and exhort each other to trust in Christ, and to love each other as Christ did; and in this, wherein we all agree, let us be wise only and fervent, and strive who shall be greatest and go foremost.

And in that which is not opened to all parties, let us be meek, sober, and cold; and keep our wisdom secret to ourselves, and abide patiently, till God open it to other also. The cause why the third part say that this word (is) compelleth us not to believe the bodily presence of Christ to be there is this. The Jews (say they) are wont ever to name the memorial and signs of things with the very name of the thing signified; that the very name might the better keep the thing in mind: as when Jacob, Genesis 32, turned home again out of Mesopotamia, saw the angels of God come against him, he called the place where he saw them Mahanaim, an host; because that his posterity in time to come, when they heard the field, which was none host, yet so called, should ask why it was so named, that their elders might thereby have an occasion to teach that Jacob saw there an host of angels.

And again in the same chapter, when the angel that wrestled with him had blessed him, and was departed, Jacob called the name of the place Pheniel, God’s face; that the people in time to come should ask why it was called God’s face, and their elders should answer, because Jacob saw there God face to face, that the name should keep the thing in mind.

And again, in the thirty-third, where he had made booths, or houses of boughs for his beasts, he named the place Succoth, that is, booths.

Item, Genesis 33, he bought a parcel of land and built there an altar; and called it, EL Elohim Israel, The mighty God of Israel.

Item, Genesis 35, he called the place El Bethel, The God of Bethel. And Genesis, the last chapter, Joseph held a lamentation for his father seven days, and the people of the country called the name of the place Abel Masrain, Genesis 1. the lamentation of the Egyptians. Now the place was not the lamentation; but so called to keep the lamentation in memory.

Item, Exodus 12 the lamb is called Pesah, a passing by; because the angel did pass by the houses and hurted not where it was slain, and the blood stricken on the posts: that the name should keep the thing in memory.

Item, Exodus 29, and Leviticus 7, almost everywhere the beast offered for sin is called sin; which use of speaking Paul useth, Romans 8, and 2 Corinthians 5, and calleth Christ sin; when Christ yet is neither sin nor sinful, but an acceptable offering for sin. And yet he is called our sin, because he bare our sins on his back; and because our sins are consumed, and made no sin in him, if we will forsake our sins, and believe in Christ for the remission thereof. Christ is also called our righteousness, to certify us that when we have no righteousness of our own, yet that his righteousness is given us, to make satisfaction for our unrighteousness, if we will believe it.

Item, Exodus the 30, the sin or sin-offering is called atonement; and it was yet but a sign, certifying the conscience that the atonement was made, and that God had forgiven the Sin.

Item, Judges 1, they called the name of a certain city Horma, as it were an utter destruction; because that they had utterly destroyed man, woman, and child, and all that bare life.

Item, Judges 15, the place where Sampson killed men with an ass's jaw was called Lehi, that is, jaw-bone, to keep the act in mind.

Item, Judges 18, there went a company out of the tribe of Dan, and pitched besides Kiriath Jearim, in Judah, and the place was called ever after Mahond Dane, the host of Dan, only to keep the thing in mind.

Item, 1 Kings 6, a great stone, where God slew fifty thousand, was called the great lamentation; insomuch that the text saith, they put the ark on the great lamentation.

Item, 1 Kings 7, Samuel pitched a stone on an end, and called it the help-stone; because God had there holpen them, and given them a great victory of the Philistines.

Item, the last of the 3rd of Kings, Sedechias came to Achab with a couple of horns on his head, saying, "With these horns shalt thou slay the Assyrians." He meant not that Achab should take these horns, and gore at the Assyrians; but would that he should believe only that, as a beast scattereth a cock of hay with his horns, so should Achab scatter the host of the Assyrians with his host.

Item, Numbers the sixth, He that voweth abstinence must let his hair grow, to keep his abstinence in mind; and when his abstinence is out, he is commanded to shave the head of his abstinence, and to offer such offerings as are there appointed, after that he hath shaven off his abstinence. Lo here, the hair is called his abstinence, and is yet but a memory of his abstinence.

Item, Jeremiah 7, the prophet was commanded to shear off his abstinence, and to cast it away: which abstinence is but his hair.

Also, Ezekiel 12, God commanded the prophet to remove with all his goods, after such manner as conquerors carry the people captive from country to country; and when he had done, the Lord said unto him, "This prophecy is the captain, or prince, of Jerusalem," when yet it was but an ensample to him, how he should be served.

Finally, where Matthew and Mark say, "This cup is my blood of the new testament, Paul and Luke say, "This cup is the new testament in my blood." Now must the sense, of the words of the two first, Matthew and Mark, be all one with the senses of the words of the two last, Luke and Paul. The words of Luke and Paul are: "This cup is the new testament made in my blood," or for my blood's sake.

Now the testament is, that his blood was shed for our sins; but it is impossible that the cup or his blood should be that promise. Wherefore the sense must needs be, that it is the memorial and seal of the testament only. And therefore where Matthew and Mark say, "This cup is my blood of the new testament," the sense must needs be also, that it is the memorial and seal thereof; only calling, after the use of the Hebrews, the sign with the name of that which is signified; that is to say, calling the wine, which only signifieth the blood, with the name of the blood. And then it followeth that the bread is called his body after the same manner, because it is the sign of his body.

These and like examples move the third part to affirm, that we be not bound to believe that the bread is the very body of Christ, though it be so called; nor that the bread is transubstantiated into the body: no more than the things here rehearsed are that they be called, or transubstantiated into the very things which they be called.

The other will answer, though this memorial were not the things whose names they bear, yet it will not follow that it should be so here in the sacrament. For they that gave such other names had no power to make the things so to be: but Christ is very God, and hath power to make his body to be everything and every where. I answer, that God cannot make every of his creatures God too; neither can it be proved less repugnant that a creature should be everywhere, than that he should be God.

Moreover, though God, where he appeared to Jacob, had pitched a stone on an end, and called it God's face; yet had we not been any more bound to believe that it had been the very face of God, than if Jacob had done it. The almighty ness of God standeth not in that he is able to do all that our foolish, lewd thoughts

may imagine. But because all power is his and of him, and that he doth all he will, and hath made all of nought, and can bring all to nought again, and can do all that includeth not contrary to the truth and verity that God hath put in his creatures; and because he can do things impossible for man, or any other creature to do, or to think how they should be done; therefore he is called the Lord Almighty. But because to brawl about such possibility or impossibility is the lust of sophisters, and also the desire of the devil to quench the profession of our baptism, and to wipe out the image of Christ out of our hearts, and a thing endless; therefore I count it wickedness to wade forth in it, and to give them that seek it an occasion perpetually to scold. The negative may a man hold, till they can prove the affirmative.

Moreover, if bread be the very body of Christ, whether abiding the very body still or transubstantiated, and enjoy the glory of the soul of Christ, and also of the Godhead, it seemeth impossible to be avoided but that Christ was made man and died: also bread, which seemeth to some a great inconvenience. Howbeit that great promotion of bread, and also that high power of priests above all angels, I admit also, to avoid all brawling. But one reason I have, unto which I cleave somewhat, and it is this.

All that is between God and man in the scripture is for man's necessity, and not for any need that God hath thereof. And other spiritual profit can none have by that faith in the sacrament, than to be taught thereby to believe in Christ our Saviour, and to do good to his neighbour. :Now is that belief and love had as well, and rather better, (as is above proved,) without such faith than with it: ergo, where the scripture compelleth to no such belief, it is wickedness to make it a necessary article of our faith, and to slay them that cannot think that it ought to be believed.

Notwithstanding all these reasons, and the damnable idolatry which the papists have committed with the sacrament, yet, whether they affirm the body and blood to be present with the bread and wine, or the bread and wine to be turned and transubstantiated into the body and blood, I am therewith content (for unity's sake) if they will there cease, and let him be there only to testify and confirm the testament or covenant made in Christ's blood and body; for which cause only Christ instituted the sacrament. But and if they will rage further with their blind reasons of their subtle sophistry and devilish idolatry, and say, where Christ's blood is, there is his body, and where his body is, there is his soul, and where his soul is, there is the Godhead and the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and there men ought to pray, and say, 'O Father, which art present with thy Son Christ, under bread and wine, or in form of bread and wine' — if (I say) they so rave, then as the old prophet for like idolatry denieth God to dwell in the temple, or to have pleasure in sacrifice of blood of goats, sheep and calves;

even so deny I the body of Christ to be any more in the sacrament, than God was in the golden calves, which Jeroboam set up to be prayed to, the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan: for though God be present everywhere, yet if heaven of heavens cannot compass him to make him a dwelling-place (as the scripture testifieth), and much less the temple that was at Jerusalem, how should he have a dwelling-place in a little wafer or crumb of bread? God dwelleth not in the temple; neither did our fathers, which were of the true faith in the old testament, pray to God as present in the temple: but the name of God only was in the temple, 1Kings 8 and his law and covenants and wonderful deeds were therein written in signs, and were there preached and testified continually of the true priests and prophets unto the people. The fathers of the true faith came thither furthermore, for the fervent love which they had towards the laws and covenants of God. For the which prophets Solomon prayed so earnestly unto the Lord God, saying: "Hear thou, O God, in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all nations of the earth may know thee, and fear thy name, as do this people Israel, etc." Read the third book of Kings, the eighth chapter. When God delighted only in the faith of the offerer, which believed in God only for all mercy, taking the sacrifice for a sure token and earnest of the mercy of God, certified by that sign, that 'God loved them, and was at one with them for Christ's sake to come: as we should be certified by the sacrament of God with us for Christ's death that is past. And Christ taught us in our prayers to look up to heaven and say, Our Father, which art in heaven; and he himself in all his prayers did lift up his eyes to heaven to his Father; and so did he when he instituted the sacrament, and rehearsed the words of the covenant over bread and wine, as it is written Matthew 26; Mark 19; Luke 22; 1 Corinthians 11; in these words, "Jesus took bread," etc.

Christ, though he affirmed himself to be the Son of God, and his Father to be in him, yet he taught not his disciples to direct the prayer to the Father in him, but up to the Father in heaven; neither lift he up his eyes, or prayer, to his Father in the sacrament, but to his Father in heaven. I know divers, and divers men know me, which love me as I do them: yet if I should pray them, when I meet them in the street openly, they would abhor me; but if I pray them where they be appointed to meet me secretly, they will hear me and accept my request. Even so though God's presence be everywhere, yet will he be prayed to up to the place only where we shall see him, and where he would have us to long for to be.

Moreover if I grant you that the blood of Christ is in the cup, it will [not] follow that his body is there also; neither when I grant that his body is in the bread, or under the form of bread, will it follow that his soul is there too. Christ made the bread the sacrament of his body only: wherefore as the bread is no similitude of his blood, so am I not bound or ought to affirm, that his blood is there present. And he did institute the wine to be the sacrament of his blood only. And haply it

was red wine, the more lovely to represent it. Now as the wine in no similitude doth represent the body, so am I not bound, nor ought to affirm, that his body is there present.

Ye say that Christ is so mighty, that though he stood mortal before his disciples' eyes, yet he was able to make the same body that same time to be in the sacrament immortal, and to be under every little piece of bread or of the sacrament, though it be no greater than a mote in the sun, and that as long, as great, and thick as he stood before them. If he were so mighty, why is he not as mighty to make his blood to be alone, and his body alone? His blood, body and soul were each alone at his death, and while the body lay in the sepulcher.

Finally, Christ said, "This is my blood that shall be shed:" ergo, it is true now, This is my blood that was Shed. Now the blood of Hales, and the blood that is in many other places, men say is the blood that was shed; ergo, that blood is in the sacrament, if any be: but I am not bound to believe or ought to affirm, that the blood that is at Hales is animate with the soul of Christ, or that his body is there present.

Wherefore, to avoid this endless brawling, which the devil no doubt hath stirred up, to turn the eyes of our souls from the everlasting covenant made us in Christ's blood and body, and to nose us in idolatry, which is trust and confidence in false worshipping of God; and to quench first the faith to Christ-ward, and then the love due to our neighbour; therefore methinketh that the party that hath professed the faith of Christ, and the love of his neighbour, ought of duty to bear each other, as long as the other opinion is not plain wicked through false idolatry, nor contrary to the salvation that is in Christ, nor against the open and manifest doctrine of Christ and his apostles, nor contrary to the general articles of the faith of the general church of Christ, which are confirmed with open scripture; in which articles never a true church in any land dissenteth.

There be many texts of the scripture, and therefore diversely expounded of holy doctors, and taken in contrary senses, when no text hath contrary senses indeed, or more than one single sense: and yet that hurteth not; neither are the holy doctors therefore heretics, as the exposition destroyeth not the faith in Christ's blood, nor is contrary to the open scripture or general articles. No more doth it hurt to say that the body and blood are not in the sacrament. Neither doth it help to say they be there, but hurt exceedingly, if ye infer that the soul is there too, and that God must be there prayed to; when, as our kingdom is not on the earth, even so we ought not to direct our prayers to any God in earth, but up where our kingdom is, and whither our Redeemer and Saviour is gone, and there sitteth on the right hand of his Father, to pray for us, and to offer our prayers unto his Father, and to make them for his sake acceptable. Neither ought he, that is bound under pain of damnation to love his brother as Christ loved him, to hate,

to persecute, and to slay his brother for blind zeal to any opinion, that neither letteth nor hindereth to salvation that is in Christ: as they which pray to God in the sacrament not only do, but also through that opinion, as they have lost love to their neighbours, even so have they lost the true faith in the covenant made in Christ's blood and body: which covenant only is that which saveth. And to testify this, was the sacrament instituted only.

Amen.

Two Ordinances in the Evangelical Convention

Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper

**“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”**

Matthew 28:19

“The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.”1 Corinthians 11:23-25



Christians of various denominations cherish baptism and the Lord's Supper in some form. Baptist and Evangelical beliefs about baptism and the Lord's Supper differ from those of many other denominations as in Catholicism, Anglicanism, Calvinism and Lutheranism, though nowadays they baptize adults by immersion on demand.

These differences are some of the ingredients in the distinctive Evangelical recipe of beliefs and practices.



Baptism and the Lord's Supper Are Symbols

Evangelicals as a whole usually use the term “ordinances” rather than “sacraments” when referring to baptism and the Lord’s Supper or Holy Eucharist. Even if “sacraments” is used, it is never intended to imply that either of these two is necessary for a person to be saved.

Evangelicals consistently declare that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are symbols and are not necessary for salvation. They are nonetheless a significant part of Evangelical practice and worship.

Because baptism and the Lord’s Supper are symbolic, the use of the proper symbols is important. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that has made possible our salvation. Baptism also symbolizes that a person through faith in Christ has passed from death to life and that this person has identified with Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

Only the total immersion of a person in water adequately symbolizes this death, burial and resurrection.

Likewise, using the correct elements in the Lord's Supper with a biblical understanding of them is important. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at his last meal with his disciples as part of the Jewish Passover (Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20). Unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine were part of the meal. Jesus indicated that the bread was symbolic of his body and the fruit of the vine symbolic of his blood. The unleavened bread symbolizes the purity of Christ, for he was without sin (Hebrews 4:15) and thus his body was an unblemished sacrifice for our sins. The juice from crushed grapes symbolizes the blood that Christ shed for us.

In partaking of the bread and the cup, Christ's disciples are to remember his sacrifice on the cross of Calvary as he gave his body and shed his blood for our sins. Evangelicals believe the Bible teaches that the elements used in the Supper are not literally the body and blood of Christ.

They are symbols of his body and blood. In eating the bread and drinking from the cup, a person does not actually partake of Christ's flesh and blood. Rather, it is an opportunity to obey a command of Christ and to recall his sacrifice for us, his presence with us and his certain return (1 Corinthians 11:24-28).

But Baptism and the Lord's Supper Are Not Merely Symbolic

Believing that the Lord's Supper and baptism are symbolic does not mean that Evangelicals believe they are inconsequential. Baptists believe that both of these are of great significance.

They are important because of their divine origin. They are not human creations but given by God to assist us in declaring and sharing the gospel (1 Corinthians 11:26) and motivating us to live the Christian life (1 Corinthians 10:16-33; 11:29).

The act of baptism affords opportunity for a person who is being baptized to testify publicly that he or she has trusted Jesus as Lord and Saviour and experienced forgiveness of sin. The person doing the baptizing can utilize the experience to explain the nature of salvation and the meaning of baptism.

The Lord's Supper provides an opportunity for both evangelism and Christian growth. The Supper movingly emphasizes the love of God that led Jesus to give himself a sacrifice for sin. For believers, the Supper affords a time for special communion with the Lord, expressing thanks for his sacrifice that enables us to be forgiven of our sin. Thus the Lord's Supper is also referred to as Communion.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper Relate to Other Evangelical Beliefs

Evangelical belief about baptism and the Lord's Supper do not stand alone. They are closely related to each other as well as to other cherished Biblical and Evangelical doctrines.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are interrelated. Evangelicals believe that the Lord's Supper should be taken only by those who have been born again and baptized.

Evangelicals base their beliefs on the Bible, including beliefs about baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Bible records that the New Testament churches practiced baptism and the Lord's Supper, in that order and as symbolic. These churches were made up of persons who had been saved and baptized. Evangelicals believe that this same pattern should be followed today.

Believing in the lordship of Christ, Evangelicals base their beliefs about baptism and the Lord's Supper on the teachings of Jesus. Evangelicals often use the word "ordinances" in referring to them because they were ordered or commanded by Jesus himself (Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

Evangelicals insist that salvation is by God's grace through faith in Christ alone, not by works or ritual (Ephesians 2:8-9). Therefore, Baptists contend that baptism and the Lord's Supper, while very significant, are not necessary for salvation.

Because the Bible indicates that all believers in Christ are priests (1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 5:10), there is no need for a priestly class to administer either baptism or the Lord's Supper. Although normally the pastor of a church baptizes and presides at the Lord's Supper, any member designated by the church could do so. In the Lord's Supper, each believer priest, and not just the one presiding is, to partake of the bread and the cup.

Soul freedom relates to baptism and the Lord's Supper in that a person's participation in each ought to be voluntary, never forced. Evangelicals have consistently advocated freedom of religion, insisting that no one be coerced to participate in any religious act, such as baptism or the Lord's Supper.

Congregational governance and church autonomy under the lordship of Christ relate to the two ordinances. Concerning baptism, each Evangelical church has the right to determine such matters as when and where baptisms will be conducted. Concerning the Lord's Supper, each congregation decides who will preside, how often the Supper will be offered, and who will be invited to participate. In regard to the latter, some churches restrict the Supper to members

of the church, many invite members of other churches of “like faith and order” to participate, some include all baptized believers, and a few open the Supper to all who profess faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Conclusion

Evangelicals believe that Jesus gave two ordinances to be carried out by a church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

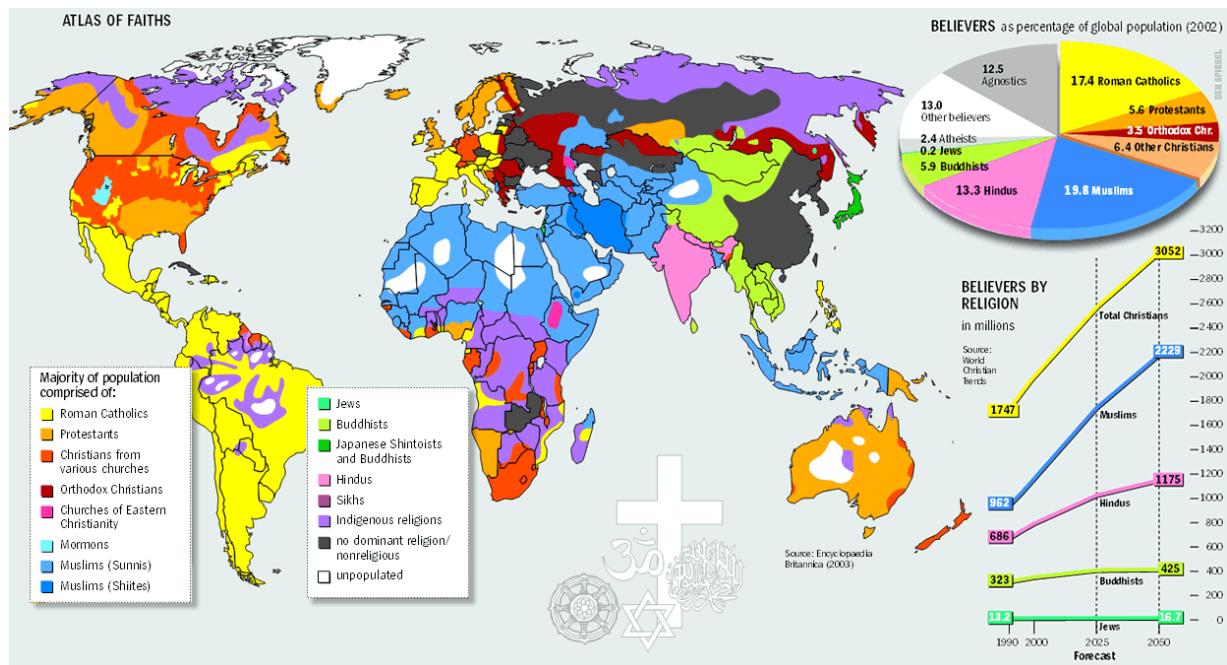
Each of these is both symbolic and highly significant because each symbolizes the Christian message of grace and salvation and relates to other major Baptist doctrines.

“We believe that Christ left two sacraments for his Church to keep, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, and that the scriptural qualifications for baptism, are repentance and faith, and that this is properly administered only by immersion, and that baptism is a prerequisite for the Lord’s Supper based on the Bible, the unaltered Word of God.”



Evangelical House Church Ministry Worldwide

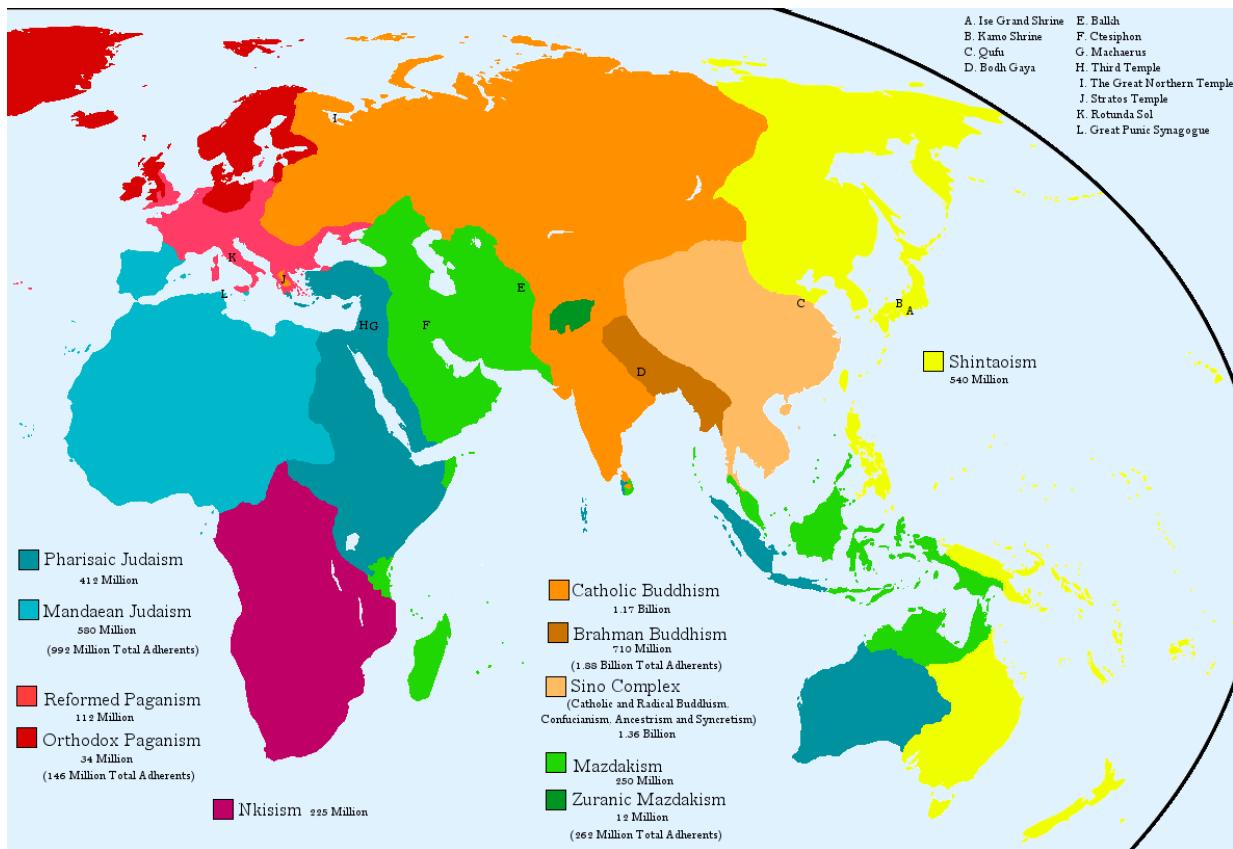
World Faiths



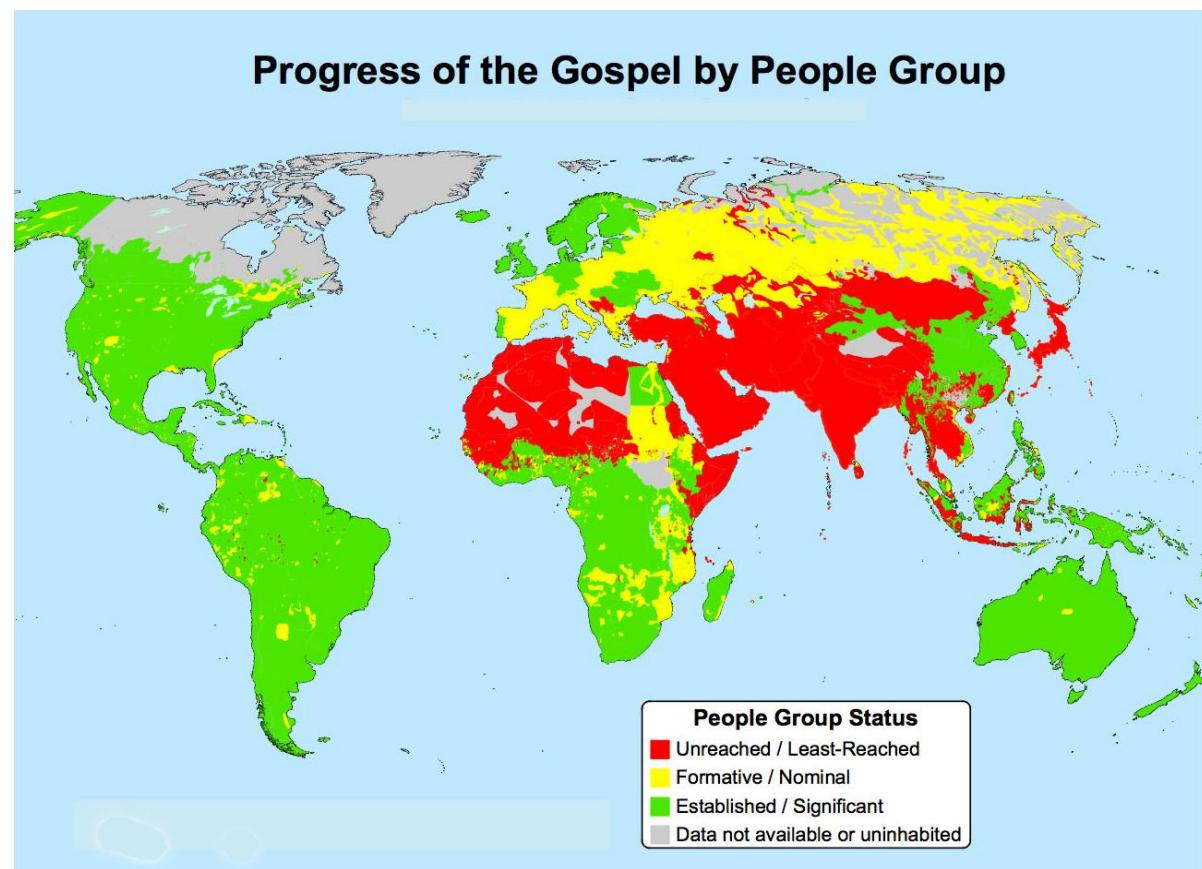
What are the largest religions of the world? What are their membership statistics, relative size, locations, rankings? Find out now simply by looking at the table and map below:

Religion:	Members:
Christianity	2 Billion
Islam	1.2 Billion
Hinduism	785 Million
Buddhism	360 Million
Judaism	17 Million
Sikhism	16 Million
Baha'i	5 Million
Confucianism	5 Million
Jainism	4 Million
Shintoism	3 Million
Wicca	.7 Million
Zoroastrianism	.2 Million

Principle Alternative Religions of the World



Progress of the Gospel by People Group



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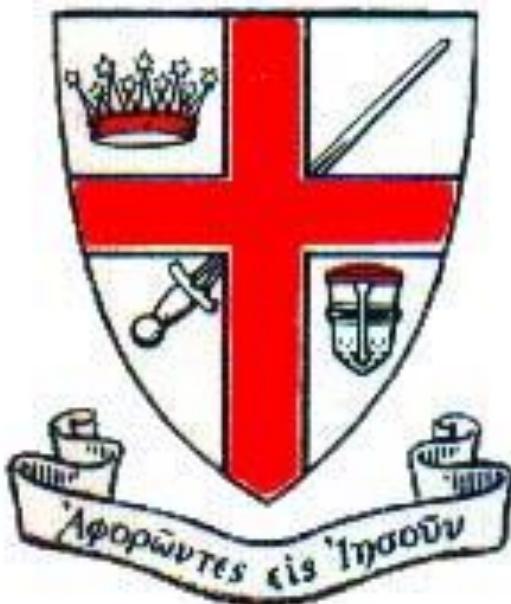
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Hebrews 12:2

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